

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk June 29, 2014

Mid Edition No 614

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Is ferry firm set to finally sink?

Latest ruling tells it to close within six months

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A weighty issue: Fighting fatism

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Balancing the Bobby on the beat with the reality of policing

A FEW years ago I was chatting to a senior police officer within Kent Police about the constant refrain of 'we want more Bobbies on the beat' from the public.

His response was short and sweet – we could do that, but it wouldn't necessarily make any difference.

With most people at work, or not spending the day peering out of the window, an officer patrolling the street would rarely be seen by crook or householder alike.

Better, then, to deploy them more strategically. Especially when you appreciate that Kent is one of the safest places in the UK to live. It made plenty of sense.

Yet as a society, we still feel a powerful sense that a visible police presence is essential both to reassure and deter.

The truth now, of course, is that to a certain extent it's a luxury we can no longer afford.

Yet balancing a public demand

with a diminishing purse, and a need to still provide all areas with adequate cover, is no easy task.

Inside, we speak to the chief constable about his new local policing model and use of technology which may just pull off what many deemed the impossible.

Meanwhile, this edition of the newspaper represents something of an end of an era. It is the last to have been produced in Kent on Sunday's home for the last 10 years in Smeeth.

From tomorrow, we move a few miles up the road to modern new premises in the very heart of Ashford town centre. So the stories you read today were written, edited and laid out while we found ourselves surrounded by boxes and crates. You can imagine the chaos...

Be sure to note our new address – see page seven for full details.

Have a great weekend.



Editor **Chris Britcher**



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Ferry firm vows to keep sailing despite decision

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

EUROTUNNEL has insisted it will fight on to overturn a decision by competition chiefs that cross-Channel firm MyFerryLink must cease operation on the Dover to Calais route.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on Friday morning confirmed its ruling that it believed the ferry route gave Eurotunnel too much of a stranglehold on the market.

It comes after Eurotunnel acquired three ferries from the defunct SeaFrance operation in 2012 and established a new service under the MyFerryLink brand.

Rivals on the route said it meant Eurotunnel – already the dominant player in the cross-Channel market – could now put the squeeze on ferry-operators by undercutting them and potentially forcing them out of business.

Hence the case was raised with UK competition chiefs.

In June 2013, the Competitions Commission (as it was then known) decided that by adding the ferries to its existing Channel Tunnel business Eurotunnel would increase



PRESSING ON: MyFerryLink is reassuring customers that it will be operating its full summer schedule

its share of the market to over half – and was likely to end up as one of only two ferry-operators on the route – leading to price rises for passengers and freight customers

Eurotunnel will now be given six months to stop running services.

It could also find another owner for the MyFerryLink business, if that made MyFerryLink completely independent of Eurotunnel.

Alasdair Smith, chairman of the Eurotunnel remittal group and CMA panel deputy chair, said:

“Eurotunnel’s purchase of the ferries means it now has over half the market and its share will rise further if competitors exit.

“It would be much better for passengers and freight customers to have three competing cross-Channel operators – with Eurotunnel running the rail link and two independent operators on the ferry route.

“We are conscious of the potential effect of our decision on the jobs of the MyFerryLink

workers. However, there will also be job losses if MyFerryLink remains on the route and another operator leaves.”

MyFerryLink insists it will appeal the decision.

In a statement, it said: “Given that any appeal is unlikely to be finally determined until much later this year at the earliest, we would like to reassure our loyal customers that we will continue to operate our full schedule throughout the summer season and beyond.”

Fury over health chief’s £200,000 salary for a two-days-a-week job

THE BOSS of an under-fire NHS trust was forced on the back-foot this week after it emerged he was pocketing a £200,000 salary for a job requiring his services just two days a week.

The chairman of the Medway Foundation Trust, Christopher Langley, was awarded the contract by Monitor – the Government regulator for health care – in February this year.

This appointment came after the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham was heavily criticised by the watchdog.

The trust which runs it had been placed in special measures in 2013 after it was found to be failing in four out of five areas inspected, including poor management, a failure to provide care, treatment and support which met patients’ needs and poor patient safety.

Mr Langley’s contract states he is only required to work one or two days a week, with occasional additional board meetings.

In contrast, Mr Langley’s

predecessor was reported as earning about £45,000.

However, Monitor hit back, saying the problems at the trust needed a capable management team.

A spokesman said: “When we took action in February, Medway was one of the most challenged foundation trusts in the country and faced a range of serious issues.

“The trust needed the right people in place to make the urgent improvements needed for its patients which is why the interim chair and chief executive were appointed.

“The interim leadership faces a large and difficult task in turning the trust around, and it is important for the people of Medway that the job is done well. While it is for the trust to agree on the pay of its senior managers, both the chair and chief executive are being paid in line with comparable senior positions around the NHS.”

Local Conservative MP Tracey Crouch described the salary as “obscene”.

Hospice fiasco claims latest high-profile senior casualty

JUST days after the chief executive of the Pilgrims Hospice organisation in east Kent confirmed he was to quit, another senior figure fell on his sword this week.

Richard Morey, chairman of the trustees, confirmed on Monday he was quitting with immediate effect.

His decision follows Steve Auty’s decision to resign.

It comes after a major furore was sparked by plans to close

Canterbury inpatient beds by 2016 in a bid to plug a £1m funding gap.

Such was the strength of feeling that the hospice was forced into a humiliating U-turn, and pressure immediately grew on those who had spearheaded the misjudged proposals.

Dr Morey said: “It needs fresh non-executive leadership to steer it through the next phase of its development.”

Regulators approve change to nuclear station life span

DUNGENESS B power station has been given a reprieve for up to 10 years after nuclear regulators approved a key safety change at the plant.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation said operator EDF could continue to use the special graphite bricks that line the core of the reactor beyond normal safety limits. Over time, as a result of being bombarded by

radiation, the bricks lose weight and can crack.

The ONR strictly regulates the state of the bricks and doesn’t normally allow them to lose more than 6.2 per cent before they are classed as having reached the end of their life and cannot be replaced. EDF has been allowed to extend this limit to 8 per cent. It could extend the plant’s life by a decade.



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Waters run dry at royal town's famous spring

AN INVESTIGATION will continue this weekend into just what caused the famous spring in Tunbridge Wells to stop flowing for the first time in 400 years.

The chalybeate spring in the Pantiles, around which the town grew up, ran dry this week, prompting regular tourist services at the site to be suspended.

Site owner Targetfollow confirmed the company had been carrying out investigations in the area, including

on the nearby commons, with the local council also involved.

Spokesman George Craig said: "We have been able to establish there is spring water flowing in the near vicinity, but at this point we don't know why the water has stopped at the chalybeate spring."

At the time of going to press, waters in the famous site had still not started flowing.



VICTIM: Tim Clayton

Brutal attack that killed a 'loving father'

A 55-year-old man has been found guilty of beating a homeless person to death after becoming enraged over his relationship with his on-off girlfriend.

Brian Sharp, of Manor Road, Folkestone, was found guilty of murdering Tim Clayton, 45, in a brutal attack last November.

After finding Mr Clayton asleep in a sleeping bag behind Europa House in Pound Way in the early hours of November 9 last year, he brutally beat him as he lay defenceless.

He was found the following day by staff reporting to work and taken to hospital. He died the following day.

Police quickly tracked down Sharp and arrested him. Before realising Mr Clayton was dead, he admitted hitting him, before refusing to offer further comment during interview. On Thursday a jury at Canterbury Crown Court found him guilty. He'll be sentenced on Wednesday.

John and Anna Clayton, Tim's parents, said: "His children have lost a dear and loving father and we now have to start to live the rest of our lives with an important member of the family missing."

Det Ch Insp Paul Fotheringham said: "This was a violent, callous and premeditated attack on a vulnerable man."

Property giant shops for a £696m slice of retail destination Bluewater

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A SIGNIFICANT chunk of the Bluewater shopping centre has changed hands this week in a deal worth £696 million.

It underlines the remarkable value of the retail Behemoth in Greenhithe which is seen as the UK's flagship commercial centre.

The sale of the 30 per cent stake, along with surrounding land, to British developer Land Securities values the entire site at somewhere in the region of £2 billion.

Additionally, for an extra £40m, the firm, the largest commercial property company in the UK, also acquired the full asset management rights to the centre and 110 acres of surrounding land.

It also underlines the increasing influence Land Securities is having over the county.

It already owns Eastern Quarry, which is earmarked for the development of a so-called 'garden city' in



RETAIL: The shopping giant

nearby Ebbsfleet. Announced by Chancellor George Osborne earlier this year, it is proposed to be the site of some 15,000 new homes.

As for the estimated 27m shoppers each year who flock to Bluewater,

they are advised not to expect to see any changes immediately.

However, it is thought some of the empty retail units may be combined to attract bigger retailers wanting larger premises.

Lend Lease Retail Partnership owns 25 per cent of Bluewater, M&G Real Estate and GIC own 35 per cent and Hermes and Aberdeen Asset Management control 10 per cent.

Scott Parsons, managing director of retail portfolio at Land Securities, said: "The acquisition of this interest in Bluewater is part of the continued strategic shift of our retail portfolio towards dominance, experience and convenience."

"We see opportunity to improve returns at Bluewater by reducing the void rate [empty units] combining units to provide fewer, bigger units which are more attractive to retailers, and improving the leisure and catering offer."

Land Securities was also behind a recently-refused plan for a major out-of-town retail estate at the Notcutts site near Maidstone.

PCC criticised by PM as pressure grows

AS KENT Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes prepares to return from her holiday, she does so with the sound of direct criticism from the Prime Minister himself still ringing in her ears.

Following the fallout from her Meet the Commissioner documentary on Channel 4 last month, and continued issues with her appointment of candidates for the role of youth commissioner, she found herself on the receiving end of David Cameron's disappointment during an interview on BBC Radio Kent this week.

Speaking to the station, he said he "didn't think she was making a very good fist of her job".

He added: "I don't think she has impressed in this role. The people of Kent elected her, they can un-elect her at the next available opportunity."

Mrs Barnes will be up for re-election in two years.

She has been abroad for the last two weeks, also missing the unveiling this week of the new policing model. See page nine for more.

Blackadder star born in Kent is mourned

THE actress Patsy Byrne, best known for her role as Nursie in classic sit-com Blackadder II, has died at the age of 80.

Born in Ashford in 1933, she died at a retirement home for actors in north-west London. Her death was announced last weekend.

She attended Ashford School for Girls before studying drama at the Rose Bruford College in Sidcup. From there she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company.

After a successful career in theatre, she would be best known for her role alongside Miranda Richardson's Queen Elizabeth in 1986's Blackadder II on the BBC.

She also had roles in Z Cars, Holby City and a BBC version of The Old Curiosity Shop. She also reunited with Tony Robinson, Baldrick in Blackadder, for his Maid Marian And Her Merry Men series.

Her death comes just weeks after fellow Blackadder star Rik Mayall died. He was 56.

Rail service vows to do better after survey

SOUTHEASTERN has received poor scores in the latest passenger satisfaction survey published by an independent public transport watchdog.

The national survey by Passenger Focus saw train-operator Southeastern get its worst score in the last five years when travellers were polled for its service over the last six months.

It achieved an overall satisfaction score of just 72 per cent, some 12 per cent lower than it scored in the six months before. Once again the main issues were over communicating with passengers when services are disrupted over the winter.

Charles Horton, managing director of Southeastern, said: "We're not surprised that our customers have responded to the survey in this way as we too were frustrated by the problems that hampered services over the winter."

"We've taken on board comments from customers about how we handled the disruption and made improvements. We recognise we have more work to do."



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Kent on Sunday is on the move as we set up home at Kent House

KENT on Sunday is moving into new offices on Monday – so be sure to use our new address when you want to get in contact with us.

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Explains publisher of Archant

Kent, Simon Irwin: "We enjoyed a great period of success at Apple Barn, winning a host of awards over the years and firmly establishing ourselves as a class apart for a free newspaper.

"And we continue to evolve which is why we're now greatly looking forward to starting the next chapter of our success story."

Which means if you want to get in touch, you'll need to now address all correspondence to:

Kent on Sunday, Archant Kent, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. All email addresses remain the same.

Our telephone number is changing too. For all advertising enquiries, call: 01233 653461

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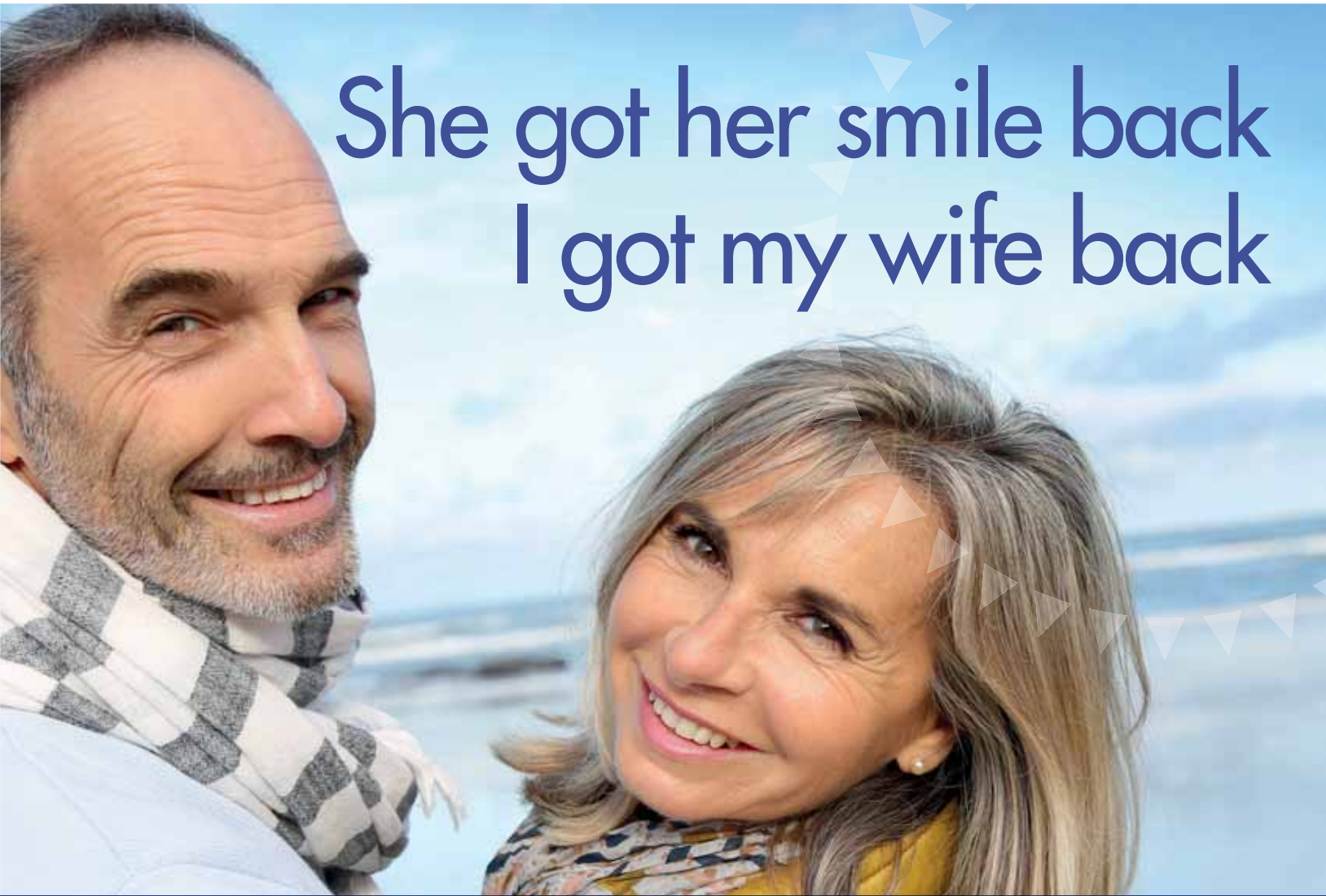


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May the force be with you: Top cop unveils new look structure

Facing £20m budget cuts, Kent Police is evolving by devolving central power to local teams and a splash of cutting-edge technology. **Maria Chiorando** reports

POLICE chiefs this week unveiled one of the biggest shake-ups in recent history as they looked to evolve in the face of management changes and yet another major reduction in funding.

Unveiled by Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, the Kent Police model comes as the force reshuffles its pack following news it must absorb another £20m in cuts.

Yet the new police chief, who only took over the role in January, insists it is not just a knee-jerk reaction to save money.

He says the new model, which devolves power away from a central hub and into 13 distinct local areas, will modernise the way the police operate in Kent and deliver the most responsive service.

Speaking to KoS this week, Mr Pughsley said: "Neighbourhood policing should be more at the heart of everything we do.

"After 30 years of policing I think it's the best way, and listening to staff and officers, they think it's the best plan, as do the public, and that has all come together.

"Obviously the financial constraints are a factor, so I've had to make sure that we'll deliver the very best we can within the financial challenges, and that any changes have the sustainability and flexibility for future challenges."

Job cuts are an inevitable aspect of the cuts. The loss of that £20m over the next two years will see the loss of around another 100 officers, a "last resort" according to the chief constable, who says every aspect of modern policing is being examined in order to try and make savings to allow for more investment in frontline services.

The fundamental changes to the model are two-fold, and were implemented immediately.

The key aspect is that rather than officers being deployed from a central location to wherever the need in the county was, now there are 13 distinct areas established which will have dedicated officers for that area.

They will join forces with established neighbourhood teams and look to develop a rapport and a knowledge of the local area. It is hoped this will strengthen relationships between the police and community it serves.

These teams will also deal with all 999 calls for their respective area.

In effect, they'll have a patch and will remain on it.

Supporters of this method claim that there are multiple benefits.

Explains Mr Pughsley: "It will breed familiarity, you will get to

know your local police officer, the whole community will get to know the officers and the local criminals will get to know the officers.

"The officers will also get to know the local criminals.

"I am satisfied with the numbers in each team, although of course I would always like to put more officers on the streets."

Specialist departments – such as the serious crime directorate and dog units – remain centralised and will complement the localised teams.

But how does this save money?

In short, by cutting down management positions as roles are dispersed to the new districts, so the headcount reduction delivers cost savings

"That has meant job losses, but not frontline officers," said Mr Pughsley. "We're taking the majority of the savings from senior managers, the rest will come from around the force."

"The priority will be, whatever the budget looks like, to keep local policing in our local communities, on the frontline, working day in day out in local communities."

The other key element of the new plan is the use of technology to reduce costs.

"We are investing in two major things. The first are computer tablets for all officers, and the second is body-worn cameras.

"That is spending to save.

"This technology will keep officers on the street longer, making them more flexible and more mobile."

His vision is that having the tablets means that every piece of paperwork can be done remotely by the officers.

This will save time, as they will not have to travel back to the police station to complete work such as victim statements, witness statements and fixed penalty notices. It also reduces a need for centralised administration.

Mr Pughsley is confident that the time saved this way in man hours will recoup the initial outlay for the tablets "tenfold, if not more".

In terms of the body-worn cameras, anecdotal evidence suggests that people being arrested or apprehended tend to behave less violently when they see a camera.

Secondly, digital evidence such as these video recordings can be used in court as evidence, which could lead to less officer time in court and more guilty pleas.

The scheme won the backing of Ian Pointon, chairman of the Kent Police Federation, which represents rank and file officers.

However, he says we should be clear as to what underpins the new look approach.



FACING CHANGE: Despite budget cuts Chief Constable Alan Pughsley says his main aim is to deliver the best possible service to the people of Kent.

He said: "This is not about new and extra resources, this is about trying to do the best with an ever-shrinking number of resources."

It's a claim the chief constable denies, saying the lack of funding has made the force consider new and different tactics, ones which could actually improve the service.

Explains Mr Pughsley: "There are at least three police stations that didn't used to have 999 response working out of them."

"Tunbridge Wells, Dover and Swanley have now got more coverage from a local point of view."

"As a direct result of that, on day one, 7.30am in the morning, there was a call to a dangerously parked car on the A20 and we were able to get to that and resolve it within nine minutes."

"Before the new model, it would have taken over 25 minutes because they would have come from a different police station."

"Already we're seeing the better deployment is giving us better response times."

Although Mr Pughsley is clearly the architect of the plans, Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes was also involved. But she remained on holiday as the scheme was launched.

Mr Pughsley explained: "The operational model and the operational delivery is the chief constable's responsibility, so that's why I led the change, both in the media and operationally."

"It's my model."

"She was briefed before, she supports the model, she'll be briefed when she gets back to allow her to do her job, which is to hold me to account."

"It's not her job to implement the policing model. I have known the commissioner for some time, and we've got a professional working relationship."

"In addition, we both hold a desire to deliver the very best service to the people of Kent, and the very best service with victims and witnesses at the heart of it."

■ **What do you think? Join the debate and share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**



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IT IS perhaps ironic that a little over six months after swathes of the county found itself under water following torrential downpours, the issue of the county's potential water shortage continues to be a major issue.

Because while the likes of the reservoir at Bewl Water, in Lamberhurst, may be brimming right now after a wet winter, it takes little for Kent to be plunged into another water crisis.

Cast your mind back to 2012 and only one of the wettest summers on record saved us from a major year-long drought.

Yet there is far more at stake than the unpredictable British weather.

An ever increasing demand for housing and a rising population means natural resources are being consumed at an ever more rapid rate.

Kent is defined as an area of 'water stress' because the current and future household demand for water is a high proportion of our rainfall.

As our population grows, with Kent County Council projecting a ten per cent rise – representing around 184,700 new residents by 2031 – campaigners are arguing we will begin to run out soon.

Andrew Ogden is south east chairman of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) – a group set up to develop professional understanding of the water industry.

He told KoS: "We have to think about the future for water resources across the county. It's just a question of whether people have the courage to say we have to do something about the situation now or whether they wait until it becomes too late. There will be a tipping point with water resources."

The Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England is also concerned.

The chairman of its environment committee is Graham Warren. He said: "We are standing on a knife edge, with some water providers in particular areas of the county likely to go into a deficit in the next five years."

"Kent is a naturally dry region. We have almost the lowest level of rainfall per person in the country. This means we start out with a low level, and when you add in other factors, our water resources have become seriously stressed."

Southern Water – one of the county's largest water suppliers, with two million customers – believes the situation is offering up no cause for concern... yet.

Its water resources and strategy manager, Meyrick Gough, told KoS: "Water supplies this year are in a healthy position in the south east following the wettest winter on record which has replenished water sources. We have just prepared our water resources management plan which we create every five years to set out our strategy for ensuring water supply in the future."

"This sets the foundation for what we'll do to create a robust water supply for customers for the next 25 years."

But with one eye on the future, campaigners say the measures water companies in Kent are taking are not enough.

CPRE Kent's Graham Warren said: "They have focused their efforts on reducing demand, but in reality there need to be major supply projects being brought forward. These could be reservoirs or schemes to bring water in from elsewhere in the country."



FUTURE: Bewl Water (left), CIWEM's Andrew Ogden (top) and Meyrick Gough (above) of Southern Water

Making waves amid fears we will run out of water

With long-term resources on a 'knife edge' and demand due to increases, **Jamie Weir** looks at the future of water supplies

What they can't do is ignore the problem.

"Broad Oak, near Canterbury, has been mentioned as a possible reservoir site which would be much smaller than the one originally proposed in the 1970s. We would certainly support that, as something needs to be done fast. Although there is an idea on the table, nothing has happened yet."

"There are other issues too. The government have tried to keep water costs artificially low so that consumers get cheap water. That has meant that many water suppliers simply don't have the money needed to invest in the big projects which will keep water supplies more secure."

"Europe has been a stumbling block as well. Its environmental regulations have meant that water companies aren't able to take as much water from rivers and boreholes as they need to. These European regulations came about as a way to lessen the impact on wildlife, which we support, but they've ended up restricting water supplies in Kent when they're necessary."

Southern Water's Meyrick Gough insisted money was being invested. He said: "In the last plan period we identified £180 million to spend on water resource infrastructure and in the next plan, we have identified a fur-

ther £250 million. I'm confident that we haven't underinvested in our infrastructure."

"We are also developing a strategic approach to working with the region's other water suppliers. This means that we are looking to share water resources where it is the most cost effective, sustainable solution."

Another of the main water companies in Kent, South East Water, has looked at how its customers are using water, and found that despite the various water-saving technologies available, its customers are still consuming around 10 litres more water each day than they did a decade ago. That amounts to more than 3,500 extra litres of water used per household each year in Kent.

It says it is looking to reduce household water use by almost 15 litres per day over the next 15 years through a combination of initiatives like water meters and awareness activities.

Southern Water insists such steps have already had a major impact.

It claims in 1989 water companies across the south east were supplying around 700 million litres per day. Today that's just 530 million.

That drop has been achieved through water efficiencies such as dual flush toilets and water metres.

But Mr Ogden, of CIWEM, isn't convinced.

He said: "Solutions like metering don't help very much over the longer

term. As people get used to them, they become less frugal and start thinking that it doesn't cost that much to wash the car, or water the garden, so they just do it anyway. The figures show that in the short term people use water more efficiently, but that drops away fairly sharply once people have got used to it."

The main issue is how to cope with the explosion in housing.

Mr Ogden adds: "Large-scale development in the different districts is causing a huge amount of pressure on water supply, with places like Canterbury, which wants to build thousands of new houses, creating a problem that will be difficult to solve. We have a real struggle with water being attacked from both sides. There's a reduced supply, but an increase in demand as we see more houses built and a rise in people in the county."

"One factor which really concerns me with regard to water is fracking. There are four sites which have been identified in Kent, and they represent a real, serious threat to our water resilience."

"If they frack at the levels proposed, using the chemical proposed, then there is a serious risk that it would re-activate faults in the area, opening up the chalk to the chemical and allowing them to migrate into our aquifers."

That could lead to major contamination.

"Once there is groundwater contamination, it is immensely difficult to get rid of. When you consider around 70 per cent of our water supplies come from the chalk in Kent's North Downs, the hills which stretch from Sevenoaks down to the Dover cliffs, it could cause a real problem. It would turn into a crisis and could take years to deal with."

Despite the potential risks of fracking – the extraction of shale gas by injecting water and chemicals into shale rocks at high pressure, allowing the gas to flow out – water companies have not opposed the technique.

Climate change is also likely to be significant in the future, with more extreme weather events likely according to Southern Water.

Mr Gough told us: "We have purposely addressed the issue of real extremes to make sure climate change doesn't impact on water supplies in the future. As an added measure, we have also added a safety margin to make sure that whatever happens, we will have enough resources."

Mr Ogden isn't so confident that this modelling will help. He said: "Modelling just predicts the future. While I'm sure it's useful, it's just a guess, and the further into the future they try to predict, the greater the chance things will go wrong. It seems to be tempting fate."

■ **What do you think? Join the debate and share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

After five brutal attacks over a three-day period, security issues have been raised at HMP Elmley on Sheppey, where staff are increasingly in fear of prisoners overrunning the jail, writes **Chris Murphy**

‘Organised inmates’ a safety concern for prison officers being stretched to the limit



DANGER ZONE: Reduced staffing levels are impacting on safety in prisons

ONE of our prisons has been described as a “powder keg ready to explode”. Last weekend, over three days, five staff at HMP Elmley on Sheppey were savagely attacked by a single high-risk prisoner who was intoxicated on either drink or drugs, or both.

In one incident, it is claimed the prisoner knocked a senior officer out cold and then jumped on him and battered him around the head. The prison handles Category B and C inmates.

Worse yet, with dangerously low staffing levels, and a prisoner population that is “getting organised”, the jail could one day be overrun.

That is according to one of the wardens at the prison and a leading member of the Prison Officers’ Association.

Mike Rolfe told KoS that the position in which staff found themselves on a weekly basis meant many resigned or went off with stress.

Mr Rolfe said: “Five staff were assaulted and injured on one wing over three days.

“They were attacked by an intoxicated inmate – we don’t know if it was alcohol, drugs, or a mixture of both.

“He was a life-sentence prisoner who had been sent to Elmley because he was a discipline problem at another prison. We have loads of them like that at Elmley that shouldn’t be there.

We are a remand jail, but we take them in as others see a prisoner’s discipline record and don’t take them.

“So, basically he was intoxicated and decided to pick a fight with staff.

“He knocked out the senior officer cold and then jumped on top of him and was battering him around the head while he was unconscious. This inmate also did it to another member of staff, who luckily wasn’t knocked unconscious but was left with several marks after taking blows to the head.

“This prisoner is quite strong, so it could have been much more serious than it was.

“I know the guy who was knocked unconscious is still struggling to gain back his hearing at the moment, so it has left him with an injury.”

Incidents like this are not as rare as people might expect and staff members are concerned.

Mr Rolfe said: “Staff are obviously worried about their safety and there is concern about security wings. Security checks and the more routine cell searches have not really featured as an integral part of the daily regime.

“Basically, checks are not being done to see if prisoners have got weapons in their cells, whether they’ve got alcohol in their cells. There is a real fear among staff there could be more follow-up assaults as a result of this.”

THEY WERE WARNED

LAST November a similar incident threatened to turn more serious when prisoners took control – briefly – of part of HMP Maidstone.

It involved 40 inmates but was eventually resolved after a tense several hours without anyone being hurt.

At the time, Prison Officers’ Association vice-chairman Ralph Valerio said staff shortages at Maidstone may have been a factor and added that staff “have been warning for some time at HMP Maidstone that because there are less of them available, in order to deliver the regime the prisoners expect, there’s growing discontent”.

He warned then of potential incidents at other jails because of staff cutbacks to save money.

After the weekend of violence, the union’s staff committee advised officers to withdraw their labour on Sunday morning under the Employment Rights Act where any individual can

withdraw their labour if they feel in danger if they did work normally.

Mr Rolfe said: “The staff did that and a meeting was held with management where some demands were put.”

These included a request to increase staffing levels on this 180-prisoner wing from one senior officer and six officers to one senior and perhaps eight officers.

The staff also want a review of the type of prisoners transferred to Elmley and their suitability, with better management of the ones it already has, and perhaps some moved on.

In addition, staff want more searches of cells, plus a review into systems of work.

Mr Rolfe said the management agreed with the demands and negotiations were now ongoing.

He added: “They are going to move some of the trouble-making prisoners.”

Mr Rolfe revealed staffing levels were a major concern for those working at the prison, saying: “We are more than 30 staff short. We should have about 180, but there are less than 150 prison officers. On top of that, there is an increasing percentage of those off sick from assaults but also from the stress of the job.

“The threats they receive are actually burning people out. So that figure of 150 officers is exacerbated by the number missing.

“Bear in mind, Elmley holds 1,256 prisoners. At weekends, there are only 56 prisoner officers on duty.

“It wouldn’t take much for things to kick off in a big way. We could quickly lose control if prisoners became organised, and slowly they are because of staff shortages.

“That shortage also has a knock-on effect for the prisoners because they get less time out of their cell, making them angrier.

“It is a boiling pot of disaster at this moment in time. It is like a powder keg, but this situation is not isolated to Elmley. Places like Maidstone are having to send staff over to us, which leaves them short. This is happening across the UK.”

The officer said a recruitment campaign was under way, which should help, and even former employees were being tempted back to work.

He said: “The service is in dire straits at this time. They gave voluntary redundancy to a lot of staff on the higher pay packages and then didn’t replace them as spending cuts came in.

“At Elmley, I am seeing weekly resignations by people taking jobs paying £15,000 less, purely because they see such a dangerous environment and the money is no longer worth it.

“Whatever they pay, it’s not worth it, really, in terms of their own safety.

“It’s quite a scary situation.”

The Ministry of Justice stressed the prison was operating as normal and said: “Two members of staff did receive hospital treatment following an incident at the prison. We have referred this incident to the police.”

Kent Police confirmed that inquiries were continuing.

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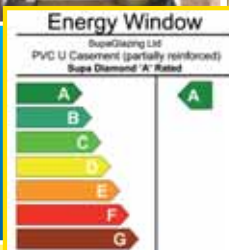
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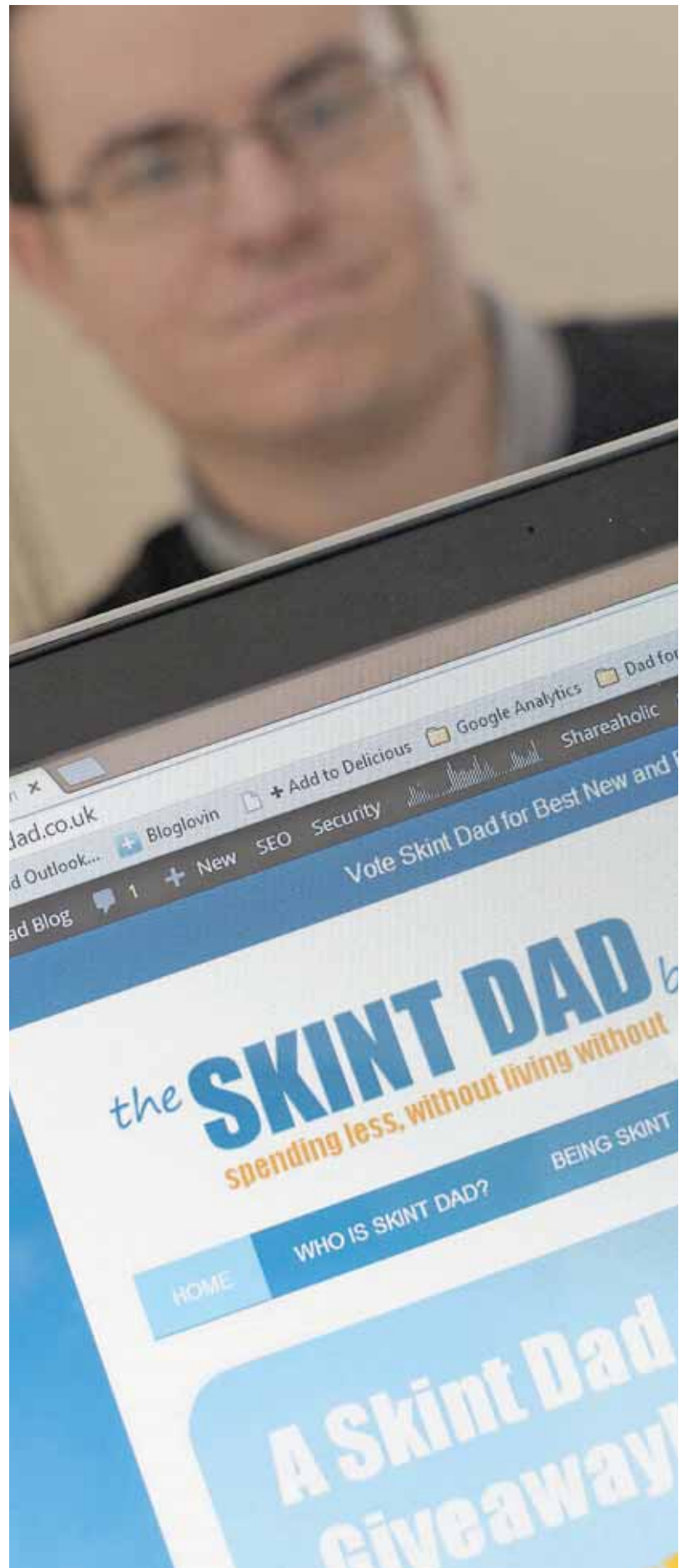
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Caroline Read meets the 'normal bloke' from



SAVING MONEY: Ricky Willis is the Skint Dad, whose advice has struck a chord with others

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Tunbridge Wells whose online advice is helping many thousands to 'spend less without living without'

Modest dad who is top blogger and smartest shopper

Pictures: ADY KERRY

LAST summer, Tunbridge Wells resident Ricky Willis changed his life. Realising that, like many other couples in the UK, he and his fiancée were spending so much on childcare and the cost of commuting that he'd be just as well off not working, Mr Willis took the brave decision to quit his job and became a house husband.

Taking on the full-time care of the youngest of his three daughters, now two, was daunting enough but just a few weeks into the new arrangement, Mr Willis' finances were in crisis.

Having taken the time to actually sit down and add up all their debts and credit cards, he concluded the family would have to make significant changes in their spending habits.

"We had really become unstuck financially and that's when I wrote a

blog post called Surviving On The Breadline," says the 35-year-old.

"That got picked up on and it all went crazy. It was quite hard-hitting and it got noticed by Mumsnet, got put on the front page of their website and then it went viral. I'd only just started blogging, just for something to do really, and it was only really meant to be about dad stuff."

Mr Willis' blog, Skint Dad, was born from that single post because from there it developed into a way of documenting the ways his family were cutting back. It struck a chord with so many people that passing on money saving tips and advice quickly became the blog's unique selling point.

Now it's a one-stop shop for a host of ways for family's to scrimp and save in these tough economic times.

But Mr Willis, who used to work as an account manager for a printing

firm in London, says what sets his blog apart from others with a similar theme is that he is not a money saving expert.

"I'm just a normal bloke. I'm just trying to do the best for my family," he says.

In November last year, only a few weeks after his heart-felt blog post about the family's financial situation, someone suggested he enter a competition with leading money saving website Savoo.co.uk.

"I got told I was through to the last eight finalists and went up to London for the award. The rest is history really. I won £10,000 and every day since then my life has been all about this blog."

He was crowned the 'UK's smartest shopper' and since then Mr Willis has



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been using his newly discovered social media and blogging skills to write about everything from debt advice to recipes for cheap family meals.

His blog has become so high profile, with 30,000 page views each month and rising, it's been written about in the national press and Mr Willis is hoping to branch out into writing money saving features for newspapers and magazines.

"Our lives have completely changed," says Mr Willis.

"We've had to try and cut back, take hold of our spending in really clever ways and get really serious about it. I started looking at things like going into a shop and buying a sandwich and a drink and thought 'that's £5.20, I could cook a family meal for four if I wanted to'. So now I try to have that mindset in everything I do."

But Mr Willis is keen to point out the family doesn't restrict spending too much. He says by following a few rules you can make small savings each day – adding up to a large saving each month.

"My mantra is 'spending less without living without'. We're not scrimping on life. If we want a family holiday we'll go to Butlins, if we want a nice meal I'll cook one from scratch. You can do all these things, you just need to be a bit more savvy about it is all."

Skint Dad has gone, in just a few months, from a hobby – a way of chatting about the challenges of becoming a stay-at-home dad – into a widely read, highly respected blog giving useful tips and important advice. Readers see that Mr Willis can

do it and it gives them inspiration.

"I'm no-one special. I'm just a guy from Tunbridge Wells, a run-of-the-mill person who wants a better life and is willing to do something about it."

Far from holding back on living life, Mr Willis and his partner are planning a wedding next year.

"We're in debt but we're in control again so we're getting married at a pub in Tunbridge Wells and we won't be spending thousands and thousands of pounds. My other half, Naomi, is getting a wedding dress for less than £100. You really don't have to spend a fortune to have a nice party. Spending £4,000 on a dress is crazy."

And Skint Mum has been getting in on the action too. Mr Willis' partner, who was the higher earner when they both worked and remains in her HR job, has also been adding to the blog lately. She's been sharing tips for brides-to-be on saving money.

Most popular on the Skint Dad blog are Mr Willis' 'Saturday night fakeaway' recipes where he buys the ingredients for a homemade alternative to expensive takeaway meals. Most recently he blogged about the katsu chicken curry with rice and apple and ginger dim sum he knocked up for £3.48. It seems that as well as turning his hand to budgeting and writing, he's not a bad cook either.

"I wake up in the morning and I have e-mails from people all over the world. Someone from Massachusetts saying they loved the latest blog post."

"People reach out and it's great. It just shows that people do want to read these sorts of things and that maybe I'm helping them."

■ Visit www.skintdad.co.uk and follow Mr Willis on Twitter at @SkintDadUK.

✓ Audit your life

Make a note of everything you spend throughout a month and create a statement of affairs. At the end of the month go down the list one-by-one and see if you can reduce and cut back the following month.

✓ Bogof with a friend

Find a relative or friend and go shopping for buy-one-get-one-free offers. Things like toys are often two for one which isn't much help if you don't need two, but they are great if two of you are shopping together and you can split the cost.

✓ Skill swap

If you have a skill such as building websites, creating blogs or you're a whizz with social media, why not skill swap? In the past I've helped a hairdresser with her Facebook page in return for a free haircut and helped an electrician with Twitter in return for a couple of sockets fitted.

✓ Be social

Most well-known brands have a presence on social media. Follow them and look out for special promotions they may mention. Even better, send them a message telling them how much you love their products and you may get a discount code in return.

✓ Hound your suppliers

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SKINT DAD'S TOP 10

money saving tips

instance, every three or so months I call Sky and ask for a price reduction otherwise I will have to cancel the service. The trick is not to ask for a massive reduction but instead just a small amount. Do this three or four times a year and watch the savings add up.

✓ Window shop

I recently had to buy a DVD player but unfortunately the model I wanted was out of stock. As I was leaving the store I saw a demonstration model in the window. I enquired and managed to buy it at half the RRP price. There was a slight scuff on the back but for that price I was more than happy.

✓ Smaller basket = smaller spend

Don't use a trolley in the supermarket. Yes, it's easier but it's also easier to fill it. Use a basket and when you struggle to carry it, you

are done. This will make sure that you are only buying things you need instead of slipping in that tub of expensive ice cream that you know you don't really need.

✓ Make use of vouchers

Using money off vouchers can mean big savings if done correctly. You can normally find them online, printed inside an in-store magazine, newspapers or they are sent to you through the post if you are signed up. Make sure you read the fine print as vouchers vary for different products.

✓ Fakeaway, not takeaway

Most Saturday nights, instead of having an expensive takeaway, we have a 'fakeaway' instead – the same meal but cooked from scratch with ingredients bought from the supermarket. Only last month we had a fakeaway Indian meal for four for £4.39. If ordered as a takeaway the same meal would have cost in excess of £20. Recipe ideas are on my blog.

✓ Use a two-step approach

When making an online purchase I use a two-step approach. Firstly I check if the store is eligible for cashback on sites such as Topcashback.co.uk or Quidco.com. Once that's taken care of, I check for a voucher code from sites such as Savoo.co.uk to discount the purchase even further.

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'Fatism' – weighty issue on top of list of social taboos?

Maria Chiorando looks at how society treats larger people and the conclusions made about them, many of which are unfounded

IF YOU were interviewing for a job and a candidate entered who was morbidly obese, would it sway your opinion of them before a question had been asked?

What if they were supermodel slim?

The reality is that in a society where sexism, racism and homophobia are now socially unacceptable, is 'fatism' now taking their place as the final taboo prejudice?

It's a debate which has, of course, raged for years.

The media's apparent obsession with appearance has piled weight onto the shoulders of those vulnerable to desiring such social conformity.

Whether it is promoting so-called 'size zero' models or painting anyone over a size 12 as overweight, as a culture it is undoubtedly a significant issue.

From the extremes of morbid obesity putting a strain onto health services to the psychological scars of those with eating disorders, the issue of weight and appearance is a complex one with no simple solution.

For many, the argument is straight forward. Do more exercise, eat less and live a healthier, longer life.

But an equal number insist that is a simplified equation which fails to tackle some of the core problems.

Some of the leading academics on the key issues chewed over the topics this week as the University of Kent in Canterbury hosted the 2nd Annual International Weight Conference.

"Weight is the last acceptable stigma," explains Anandi Alperin, a PhD student at the University of Queensland, in Australia, one of those attending the event. Anti-fat attitudes are very prevalent. This could be because weight is seen as controllable, and linked with behaviours such as overeating and under exercising."

Sevenoaks-based nutritionist Caroline Gilmartin agrees: "People often assume that if someone is overweight, it is just because they are over-eating."

"Often there are underlying factors involved, and it really isn't as simple as that. As a nation, we just shouldn't be making such snap judgements."

Adds Ms Alperin: "Anti-fat attitudes lead to discrimination. For example, overweight people are less likely to get accepted into higher education, they tend to get lower grades, and they are less likely to get hired as well."

"This discrimination has a lot of negative consequences for the people who experience the weight bias. This includes psychological distress, lowered body image and low self-esteem."

"Providing information about the various biological and genetic and uncontrollable factors that can cause people to be overweight, or obese, has been pretty successful in helping to change attitudes."

Tackling this fundamental issue has sparked academic research and debate for years.

Explains Ms Alperin: "There is a theory that says if you have two opposite groups, and they spend a lot of positive time together, this can reduce prejudice between them."

"This has been shown to be true in various experiments, but needs further research around anti-fat attitudes, which is currently being undertaken."

American PhD student Emily Kroshus conducted research which appeared to highlight how someone's appearance can have a negative impact on how they are perceived professionally. She carried out tests at Harvard University.

She explained: "I was interviewing student athletes, and although I didn't ask questions about weight, one topic that kept coming up was how none of the athletes would use their sports nutritionist."

"This woman is highly trained,

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BODY IMAGE: Do pictures of models such as Kate Moss distort reality?

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and highly regarded by her peers in the field and she has a larger body.

"From observing pictures, I wouldn't even call her overweight, but this group that is at high risk of disordered eating and low body weight totally disregarded her expertise because of her size.

"They said things like, 'she wouldn't understand,' and 'she doesn't like us because we're thin' as well as 'she wants us to gain weight and not perform well out of spite.'"

Such findings do, of course, say much about the type of person propagating the prejudice as those they speak negatively of. But sports jocks at a US university are far from alone in their apparent prejudice – consciously or subconsciously.

Explains nutritionist Caroline Gilmartin: "Because I am not a size 10, and I am a nutritional therapist, until people come and see you and realise that you know exactly what you're doing, they look at you and think, 'you're not thin, how can you be a nutritionist?'"

And it is not just the public perception of weight that is a problem, according to Emma Rich, who is a senior lecturer in the department of education at the University of Bath.

It can also be an issue for the medical establishment.

Increasingly, the NHS advises us all to live healthier lives and control our weight – especially given the explosion in the number of cases of type 2 diabetes in the UK.

The illness, caused by the pancreas not releasing sufficient insulin to break up sugars in your blood, is most commonly diagnosed among the

overweight. It can lead to a host of health issues which can put an enormous strain on resources.

And diabetes is just the tip of the iceberg of illnesses directly related to the way we live our lives.

What's more, the individual is being expected to take responsibility for their weight.

But that's not as obvious as it seems, it would appear.

Explains Ms Gilmartin: "Weight loss is not a panacea to complex health problems, but what we are seeing within health care is this moral imperative, this association of individual responsibility that complex health issues are related to.

"There is a whole complex setting to weight issues, relating to power relationships and social contexts.

"The entire complexity of the way health is practised is reduced to a very simple equation of controlling one's weight."

In an increasingly politically correct society, is there not a danger, however, of absolving people of per-

“I think there are three categories of people. People who want to lose weight, people who don't want to lose weight, and people who can't.”

Andrew Mackness,
Medway Council

sonal responsibility; of perhaps being too quick to blame our modern shape-obsessed culture?

Could it not simply be that the media reflects the changing shape of modern Britain? A society where influences have conspired to keep our youngsters inactive – a fear of abduction, video games, increased traffic – rather than active? A society where the cost of cheap, processed foods allows weight gain to be achieved so effortlessly as we then relax in front of more TV channels than ever before?

Regardless of the many arguments, a key issue remains the teasing and bullying of those with weight issues which can so often spark a Catch-22 situation and a constant spiralling of upset, eating, upset, eating.

Andrew Mackness is a Conservative member of Medway Council.

He recently chaired what was dubbed an obesity summit in Gillingham. He has also dealt with personal issues relating to his weight. He is sensitive to the power certain words can have.

He explains: "The word 'obese' can be seen as being very offensive and very insulting, when actually it is just a clinical term.

"While I think we should all be aware of health and weight issues, it is also about respect for the individual.

"There can be issues where people of a certain size are less mobile, which can restrict their ability to do some things. There are people who are obese as a result of a disability and should not accept any discrimination on that basis.

"It's about working with people to change attitudes and mind sets.

"I think there are probably three categories of people. People who want



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Week ending June 29, 2014 **21**

Campaign launched to transform



The Landmark Trust is looking to raise £671,000 to restore the building on the 19-century architect's family estate in Ramsgate, writes **Chris Britcher**

A MAJOR fund-raising campaign to help transform another part of a gothic complex designed by the famous 19th-century architect Augustus Pugin into self-catering holiday accommodation has been launched this week.

The Landmark Trust is looking to raise £671,000 to restore Pugin's Grade I-listed St Edward's presbytery, part of the Gothic Revival complex that neighbours his home in Ramsgate and St Augustine's Church.

The architect is best known for his work on the interior of the Palace of Westminster, the clock tower that houses Big Ben, and for designing numerous churches around the country.

He lived in The Grange, which he designed as his family home in 1843.

It was successfully restored by the trust – a charity which aims to rescue important historic buildings – and is now available for holiday hire.

Mr Pugin died in 1852, in Ramsgate, aged just 40. His descendants continued to live in the building until 1928, when it was handed over to

the monks of the neighbouring monastery.

The presbytery and surrounding site are on English Heritage's Buildings At Risk register and are its highest priority in the south east.

Anna Keay, director of the trust, said: "The presbytery is an integral part of Pugin's vision for the St Augustine's site, right at the gates of The Grange.

"We have already restored The Grange, reinstating the Gothic Revival interiors that were part of Pugin's dream. The presbytery is the next stage. It is of great value in its own right and the final piece in Landmark's guardianship of this incredibly important site."

The Landmark Trust bought the near-derelect St Edward's Presbytery when the monks from the monastery founded by Pugin sold their monastic site.

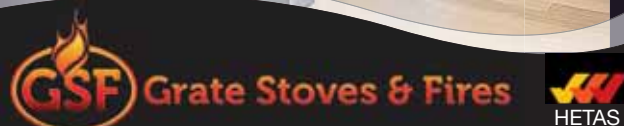
The presbytery, a twin-gabled house of brick and flint, is in need of major repairs. Once completed, it will be a self-catering holiday home for up to four people.

GRANGE: Architect Augustus Pugin lived in Ramsgate and worked on the interior of the Palace of Westminster

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architect Pugin's gothic presbytery



WHO WAS AUGUSTUS PUGIN?

A W N Pugin was one of Britain's most influential architects and designers and a key figure in the Gothic Revival style that characterises the Victorian age.

He came to Ramsgate to realise his dream to create a medieval landscape. He built the presbytery in 1850 to house a priest to minister to local Catholics in the church he was building alongside – a controversial move in an age when suspicion of Catholics still ran high. There were anti-Papal riots in Kent as late as 1850.

Used only briefly for its intended purpose, the presbytery was owned, and lived in, by Pugin's descendants until 1928, when it was bought by the monks who used it for their school.

In more recent years, a community of canonesses attached to St Augustine's monastery had lived in St Edward's Presbytery.

It has recently been announced that the monastery across the road, built by Pugin's son Edward, will become a Catholic retreat centre.

In February, 1852, aged 40, while travelling with his son Edward by train, he had a breakdown.

Unable to speak coherently by the time they reached the capital, he was admitted to a private asylum before the Royal Bethlem Hospital – better known simply as 'Bedlam'.

Ironically, it was directly opposite Southwark's St George's Cathedral, which Pugin himself had designed and where he had married his third wife just four years before.

He recovered only enough to be able to recognise his wife and be moved back to Ramsgate. He died on September 14 of the same year.

His death certificate puts the cause of death as "convulsions followed by coma".

What will be done?

LANDMARK'S restoration of the house will see its original Victorian fireplaces, joinery and other features carefully retained or reinstated.

Some 20th-century additions, put up when the building was a school, will be removed.

An oriel window added by Pugin's son, Edward, will be carefully repaired and the interiors will be furnished to evoke how they might have looked in Pugin's day.

ST EDWARD'S: The Landmark Trust hopes to reinstate the original fireplaces, joinery and other features

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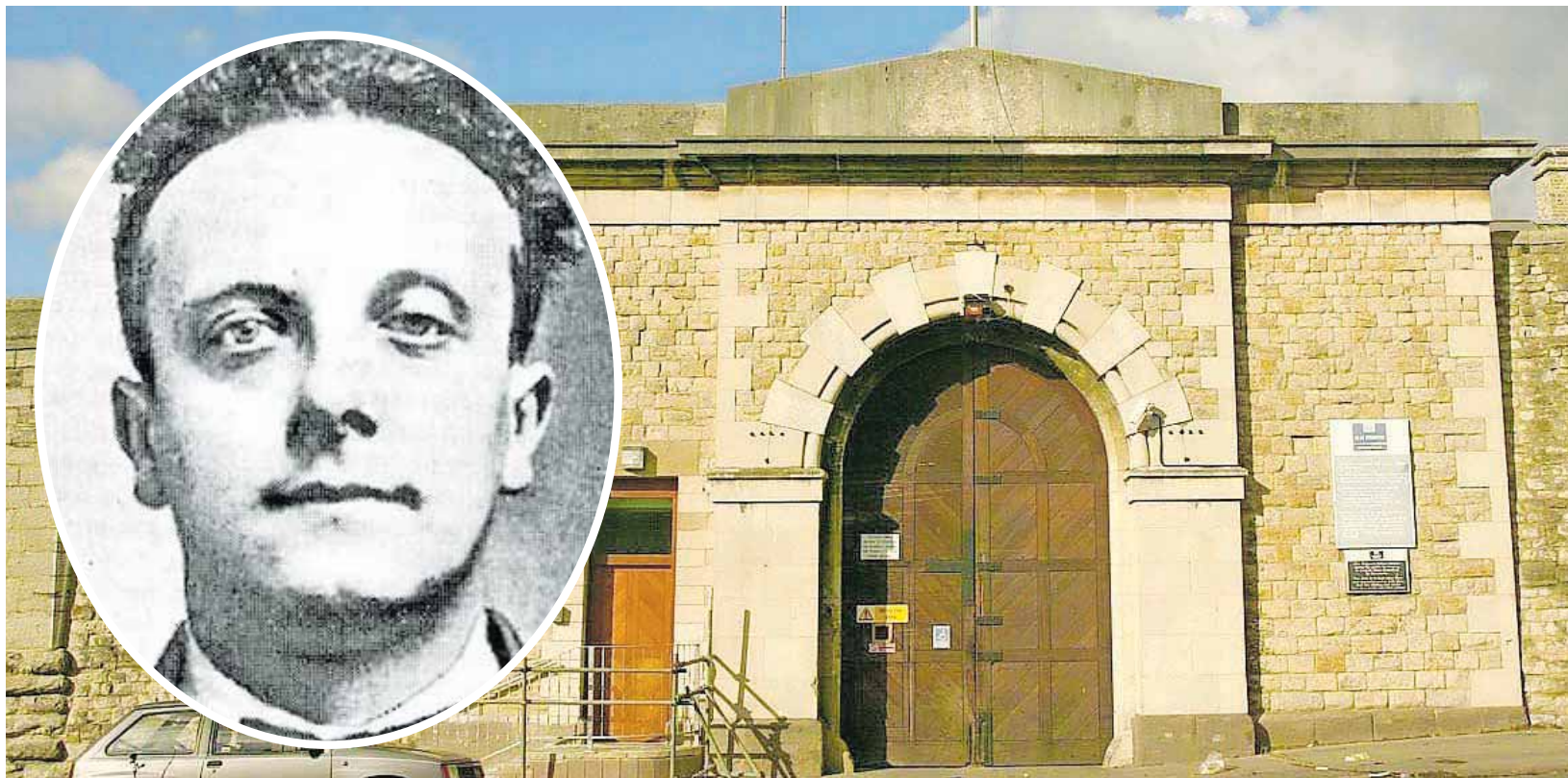
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DEBATE: Sidney Fox (inset) has the distinction of being the last man to die by the hangman's noose at Maidstone Prison (above). Fox had been found guilty of the murder of his mother Rosaline.

Enduring mystery of last man hanged at Maidstone's prison

EIGHTY-FIVE years ago Sidney Fox and his mother Rosaline checked into the Metropole Hotel in Margate. Neither had any intention of paying – it was a regular scam the criminal duo would pull off, skipping away without paying their bills.

This time, things would take a twist which, all these years later, still fascinates many.

Because before the dawn broke, Rosaline would be dead, setting off a chain of events which would see Sidney Fox become the last man to be executed at Maidstone Prison.

Whether he was guilty of a rare case of matricide remains, to this day, open to some debate.

So what were the circumstances behind one of the county's most notorious criminal cases?

Sidney Harry Fox was born on January 2, 1899, in Great Fransham, Norfolk. The fourth and youngest son of dressmaker Rosaline Fox.

His father is believed to have been a railway porter in Norfolk, but the history books have long since faded.

One thing that is certain, however, is that the father wasn't Rosaline's husband – railway signalman William Fox.

Little Sidney was doted on by his mother. He attended a local parish school but quickly found himself mixing in criminal circles.

An epileptic, he was already finding himself running into trouble with the law by the time he was a teenager.

Described as "good looking and plausible" in one newspaper report at the time, he quickly discovered his apparent charm could see him make some money.

In 1930 Sidney Fox was many things – among them a liar, a thief, a conman and a male prostitute – but, as **Chris Murphy** discovers, there is debate as to whether he strangled his own mother as a judge at the time believed

When he was 13 he went door to door claiming to be collecting for a charity. Needless to say, he pocketed the cash. When his crime was discovered, he received a common punishment at the time – the birch.

Moving on to the rank of conman, he used his looks to become "an angel-faced page boy" to an Irish baronet for three years at the politician Sir John Leslie's London home, where he earned the nickname Cupid.

Fox befriended a housemaid, stole all her money, nicked some silver from the house and forged signatures to gain further benefits.

Next was a spell as a ledger clerk at Cox's Bank in Charing Cross. Stealing chequebooks to spend on himself, including posh meals at the Jermyn Court Hotel, saw him sacked in November 1916.

By this time the First World War was under way and so young Fox got another opportunity for redemption.

Told he could avoid prosecution if he joined the Army, he accepted. But, typically, he had other ideas about heading to the front.

He instead pretended to be an Old Etonian and wrangled his way into the Royal Air Force. But he got greedy when forging his brother's

signature. His brother was an officer and when his con was traced back to Sidney, he was sent to jail for the first time.

It would not be his last spell behind bars.

At the end of 1917, he got three months' hard labour for conning a Brighton grocer.

His childhood epilepsy returned, hospitalising him until February 1919, but conflicting reports about his mental state followed.

Astonishingly, he secured another bank position – this time with Grindlay's Bank in July 1919. Just 20 days in, the forgeries started and he was jailed for eight months.

A year later, he got six months for obtaining a gold cigarette case and fine clothes by using the name of a regular Harrods customer.

And in 1922 it was a year for fraudulently obtaining credit from a London hotel, plus in 1924 he got another year of hard labour for larceny and fraud.

To make his situation worse, he was a homosexual in an era when it was illegal – and dangerous – to be one.

He earned extra cash by selling sex to older men and women. In 1927, he became a gigolo to a married Australian called Charlotte Morse.

Fox's mother was living in a Southsea flat with Mrs Morse's father.

At this point, Fox's pathway to the hangman's noose was taking shape. He insured his mother's life for £3,000 and got her to make a will entirely in his favour.

Around the same time, Fox insured the life of Charlotte Morse for £6,000 and then unsuccessfully tried to gas her to death. When that failed – she woke up to find the room filling with gas – he stole some of her jewellery, for which he was later jailed for 15 months.

His mother's relationship failed and in March 1929, when he was released, Fox found his mother in a Portsmouth workhouse.

The pair stayed in posh hotels but never paid. Fox continued to earn money as a rent boy and kept his mother well. They did, however, pawn virtually everything they had.

As Fox became increasingly desperate, a second £3,000 life insurance policy was taken out on Rosaline which was renewed on October 21. It was organised so the policies would expire at midnight on October 23.

On October 16, 1929, Fox and his mother rented a pair of rooms at Margate's Hotel Metropole.

Overnight he strangled his mother to death.



EXECUTIONS IN MAIDSTONE

IF YOU committed a crime of sufficient severity in the early 19th century or before, a death sentence would mean a very public end to your life.

You would have been transported by horse-drawn carriage to Penenden Heath, near Maidstone.

There the gallows would greet you while a crowd watched on.

It was no stranger to such killings, having also been the site of executions of those suspected of witchcraft at the

end of the 18th century. The final execution it hosted was in 1830.

The gallows were then moved to Maidstone Prison. During the 19th century, 58 executions would be carried out and a further 11 in the 20th century.

Some 28 of those were hanged, in public, outside the main gate; after 1868, they were conducted behind the walls. The youngest of those killed was 14.

It hosted its last hanging in 1930, when Sidney Fox paid the ultimate price for his actions.

THE DEATH PENALTY:

Dating all the way back to the creation of the nation back in 1707, executions had been part of the criminal justice system right up until the 20th century.

The last execution, by hanging, took place in 1964 after an Act was introduced by Parliament to stop it.

The death penalty continued, however, to be a

sentencing option for a number of years for such crimes as treason or arson in royal dockyards.

It was finally abolished – although no such sentence was ever carried out – by 1998.

Regularly debated in the Commons, signing the European Convention of Human Rights ensures no restoration of the death penalty in the UK is allowed.

To cover up the murder, he lit newspapers under her armchair. He was even able to ensure her body was discovered just 20 minutes before the expiry of the insurance policies.

It is believed Fox hatched his plot after seeing reports of the accidental death on October 11 of Lady Paget and copied the circumstances, apart from the strangulation.

It was initially determined Rosaline had suffocated to death in the smoke from the fire and she was buried in Norfolk a week later.

But investigators from the insurance companies were not so sure. In the hotel room, they spotted the carpet between the stove and chair where Rosaline was found had not been burned. The stove was said to have been the source of the fire.

Rosaline's body was exhumed and a full post-mortem examination found bruising on her larynx and no smoke particles in her lungs, proving strangulation before the fire started.

It was a breakthrough in forensic pathology at the time.

Fox was charged with murder on January 9, by which time the bruising had vanished due to decomposition. A trial at Lewes found him guilty.

He was sentenced to be hanged on April 8, 1930, at Maidstone Prison. He was moved there to await the sentence. He did not appeal the sentence.

His death was the last by execution at the Kent jail, further ones being moved to Wandsworth.

But Sidney Fox and his life would not end there.

The story has been dramatised for radio and television, and author Andrew Rose suggested in his book Lethal Witness that Fox, though a rogue, was innocent.

Instead, he was quickly hanged because he was a homosexual blackmailer who had shamed society at the time.

The debate continues.

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For more than 250 years, Calverley Grounds has been an oasis in the heart of Tunbridge Wells, as **Caroline Read** reports

IN A TUCKED away spot in the very heart of Tunbridge Wells lies Calverley Grounds, one of the oldest green spaces in the Georgian spa town.

And, although you wouldn't know it to look at it now, it started out as someone's private grounds.

Part of the land of the imposing Mount Pleasant House built by Lord Egmont around 1762, it's changed a lot since his day but has remained a tranquil hideaway from busy town life.

Set back from the roads and hidden from view between the old part of Tunbridge Wells and its bustling modern centre, it's still as peaceful and unspoilt as it was more than 250 years ago.

It has been a focal point of the local community for generations – from popular Easter events which would see dance and performance, along with Easter egg rolling competitions – to providing the perfect destination for sledging when the snow sweeps in and transforms the slopes into a winter wonderland.

And it's now enjoying a renaissance; becoming the focal point for some significant town events, bringing with them the kind of crowds not seen in the park for decades.

In fact, anyone looking for the popular Local & Live Music Festival on the Pantiles this year will find it has moved to a new home – Calverley Grounds – when the bands start up over the August Bank Holiday. And at Christmas twinkling lights emerge as it hosts the town's increasingly popular ice rink.

But while it evolves to serve the modern era, just what are its roots?

Strangely, the historic area around the park was once known as the 'new town'. The house and its land, bought by wealthy developer John Ward in 1825, became part of his Calverley estate development and he knocked down the old Mount Pleasant House, rebuilding it as the magnificent sandstone Calverley Hotel – now the Hotel du Vin.

From the luxurious hotel's terrace, guests can look down over the grounds and towards the oldest part of Tunbridge Wells.

John Ward had wanted to build a new estate so impressive that it would rival the nearby Pantiles and what locals call 'the village' area.

To design these new buildings, which all surrounded Calverley Grounds, he hired legendary architect Decimus Burton. His buildings are so striking visitors to the town can recognise them almost instantly.

Made from big, sandstone blocks they are unlike anything else and give Tunbridge Wells a distinct architectural identity.

The area was so trend-setting that in 1826, '27 and '28 – and again in 1834 – the Duchess of Kent and her daughter Princess Victoria, who would one day be Queen, rented the hotel as their holiday accommodation.

Despite proposals to turn the private grounds of the hotel into a public park dating back to 1864, it wasn't until 1921 that the council was finally able to purchase it for that purpose.

The task then was to turn the informal landscape, all grass and trees, into a formal gardens with sports facilities and provision for public entertainment.

A temporary bandstand was put in place for summer events that year and in the autumn the main work commenced in stages – it would take six years to complete.

Today the park boasts a number of facilities including a café, tennis and netball courts, gardens, picnic areas, and it also is the home to the Royal Tunbridge



Town's tucked away treasure and its royal seal of approval



FOCAL POINT: Historic Calverley Gardens is again providing residents with a venue for events including The Mela (above right) and Local & Live Music Festival and in winter it transforms into a wonderland complete with ice rink. Historic photographs courtesy of Tunbridge Wells Museum.



BOMBS AND THE BANDSTAND...

IN the autumn of 1922, the council organised a competition to design an ambitious concert pavilion with an integral bandstand on one side, which would be large enough to seat 2,000 people.

However, the local political climate was unfavourable to such a scheme. As a result, although there were 40 entries in the competition, and a winner was selected, the

council decided not to proceed but to look for a less expensive option.

As an interim measure, a bandstand adorned with ornamental ironwork was erected in 1924, and work on a matching pavilion to provide covered accommodation for concert audiences began the following year.

Sadly, the new pavilion survived only until

1940, when on the night of September 26 it was destroyed by an incendiary bomb during an air raid. The bandstand was also damaged and was fixed, as a temporary measure, with scraps from the pavilion.

Sadly the plans to replace it never came to fruition and after several safety problems the bandstand was finally removed altogether in 2010 – much to the upset of many.

Wells Croquet Club. And although it is run by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, it relies heavily on the work of volunteers.

The Friends of Calverley Grounds is a community group that works with the council to look after and plan the future of the park.

The groups' vice chairman, Nick Pope, explains why he chose to volunteer so much of his time towards the upkeep of the town centre park.

"I returned to live in Tunbridge Wells four years ago after living away from the area for around 25 years," he said.

"I often used to walk through the park, but it was only after moving to a house just off the park that I got involved with the friends' group just as it was being set up in 2012."

Although it's the council which decides on any events held in the park, the friends act as the link between the council and the public. The group is positive about the way Calverley Grounds has been put to good use over the last few years.

The Mela, a multi-cultural food and music festival, has successfully been held a number of times on the site and allayed any concerns local residents had about noise and litter.

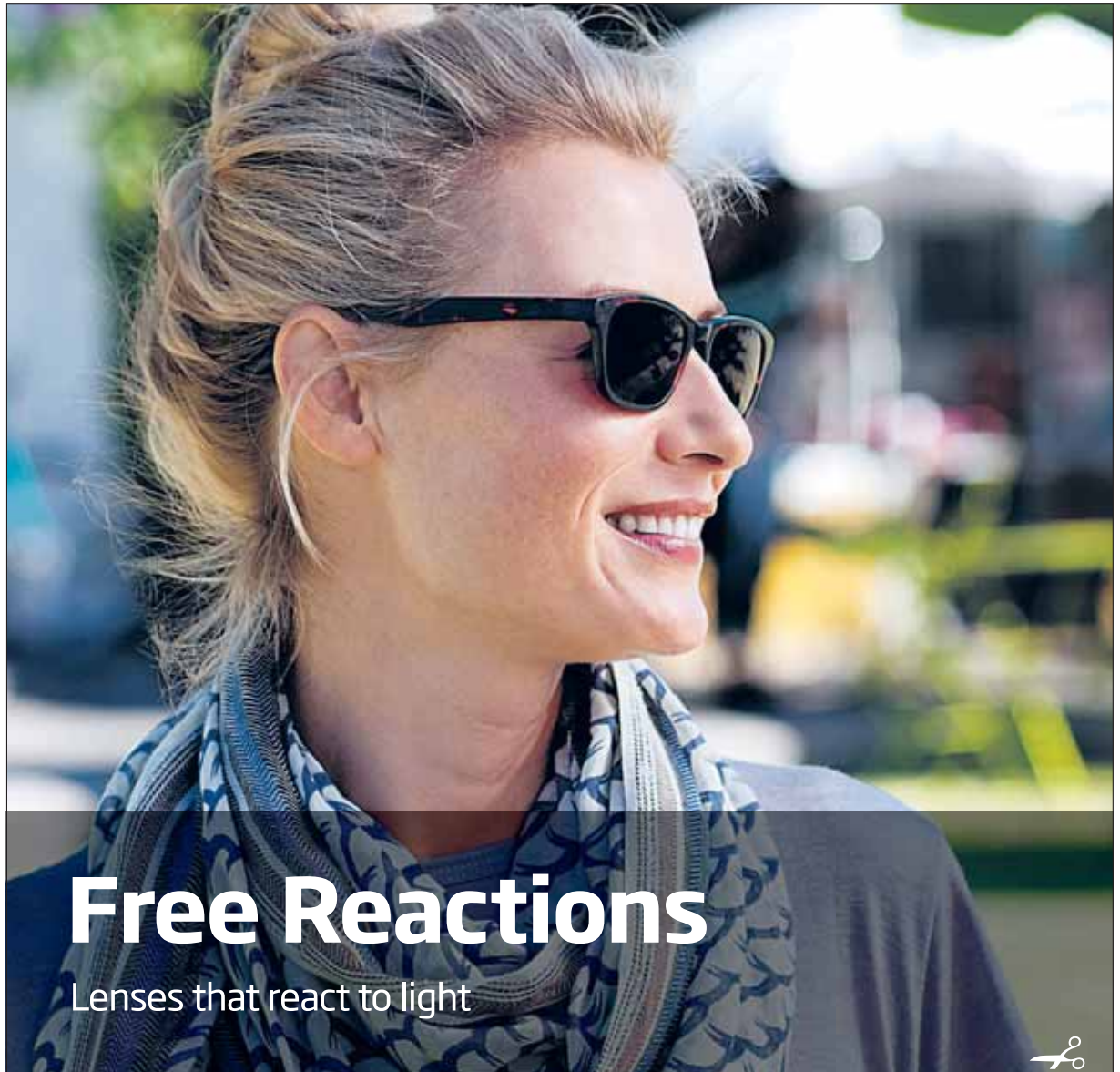
The park is also welcoming the Local & Live Music Festival this August bank holiday for the first time. Having outgrown the historic Pantiles area, where it used to be held, Calverley Grounds is seen as the perfect new venue for the event – the grass area is like a natural amphitheatre.

But it's at Christmas that Calverley Grounds really comes into its own these days. For the past three years running the park has been transformed into a winter wonderland each December with Christmas stalls, mulled wine and an outdoor ice skating rink.

"Events certainly help to make people aware of the park," said Mr Pope. "Which is definitely a good thing as many people don't know our tucked-away park exists, including some residents of Tunbridge Wells."

"Looking over the history of the park, it has always had events. It is an important open-air public space right in the centre of town that many other towns simply don't have. Let's hope that Mela, Local & Live and a few other events continue to bring the community together in the open air."

"Most houses around here have very small patio gardens, so the parks like Calverley Grounds are the green spaces for children to play. Calverley Grounds is my garden. I just share it with everyone else."



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Saintly knight pledges to lift lid on movie business

Movie legend Sir Roger Moore is bringing his revelations to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre. The charming former Bond tells **David Mairs** about the sort of stories his audience can expect to hear

» Features Editor:

David Mairs

dave.mairs@archant.co.uk
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It is perhaps a sign of Sir Roger Moore's status in this country that his planned appearance on *Knowing Me, Knowing You* With Alan Partridge (Steve Coogan's hapless alter ego) was clearly viewed by the ever-dreadful Partridge as a career highlight.

In the event, Sir Roger doesn't reach the studio, not making it much beyond the Chiswick roundabout. Partridge's show is in tatters, the host robbed of a defining moment...

All good spoof, of course, but one thing is clear from this farrago – Sir Roger Moore is an English acting legend and, whether you're a fan or not, he is one of the most recognisable faces of all. Still.

He is in Canterbury this autumn, at The Marlowe Theatre, where you can enjoy *An Evening With Sir Roger Moore* (it's actually at 5pm, but let's not quibble).

He will, of course, be telling stories from as rich a life as most of us could imagine, while members of the audience will have the

opportunity to put their questions to the great man.

Some of them, we can safely assume, will relate to Sir Roger's role as James Bond and his time in *The Saint*, in which played the role of Simon Templar, and *The Persuaders!*, but there was of course more to the man's acting than those familiar adventures.

“I used to go [to Cliftonville] every year, from the age of four or five to the outbreak of war”

He can number *Ivanhoe*, *The Alaskans* and *Maverick* among his TV escapades, while non-Bond movies included *The Wild Geese*, *Cannonball Run*, *Curse Of The Pink Panther* and *Boat Trip*.

September will see the launch of his latest book, *Last Man Standing: Tales From Tinseltown*, in which he apparently “lifts

the lid on the movie business”.

There will be plenty to talk about at The Marlowe, on Sunday, September 14, but perhaps the immediate question is why, at the age of 86, is he still doing this? Why indeed was he talking to journalists such as me about his forthcoming tour of the UK at such an unseemly hour?

It was, after all, 9.15 on a Monday morning, a time most of us are still shuffling ourselves into shape for the week ahead. Even given the hour's time difference, it was still an early intrusion into his day in the doubtless idyllic Monaco home he shares with wife Kristina.

“It has to be done,” he said. “There's no point offering a new product unless you tell people why it's there and what it's about.”


“Otherwise people in Canterbury will be spending a lovely Sunday afternoon watching re-runs of *Only Fools And Horses*. It's going to happen, I'm going to be there, so come and see me – and don't ask

Continued on page 33 »

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for your money back.”

The last remark set the tone for a chat that frequently ventured into a jolly self-deprecation.

Sir Roger is one of those people who talks, over the phone at least, largely how you expect him to. He is what you might call well-spoken, he cheerily acknowledges potentially awkward aspects of life such as his advanced years and, most strikingly, he is charming.

He offers a mixture of anecdotes that combine the off-pat with the instinctive and he is experienced enough in the ways of interview and public performance to gently usher along the conversation in a manner

“Every Easter I used to go to a service in Los Angeles—people like Cary Grant and Kirk Douglas would be there”

with which he is comfortable.

Not, of course, that we would ever wish to cause him discomfort, but there have been those who have treated his acting prowess with a little less than unbridled respect.

Remember Spitting Image, ITV's satirical puppet show, which suggested that Sir Roger's thespian skills amounted to little more than the raising of an eyebrow? Far from a precious soul, Sir Roger reportedly chuckled as much as anyone at the teasing and would cheerfully reference it without any prompting.



007: Perhaps Sir Roger's most memorable role... as secret agent James Bond

And there was no prompting when he switched the subject of his impending trip to Canterbury to a yarn involving some very big names indeed at a service in an American church not far from where he once lived.

“It's the Canterbury—I suppose there'll be a collection plate passed around,” he said.

“Every Easter I used to go to a service in Los Angeles—people like Cary Grant and Kirk Douglas would be there—and the priest would ask us actors to take the plate around.

“A lady passed me the plate without putting a nickel in it. ‘I gave at the office,’ she told me. ‘I said ‘I don't want to be standing next to you when the thunderbolt strikes’.

“You'd see the sign outside houses – ‘I have given’. I liked that.”

We'd wandered, or perhaps leapt, some distance before we'd even begun our conversation, but such was his warm chuckling at a tale that in truth could be left on the cutting-room floor that you got the impression there was nothing contrived or forced in what Sir Roger was choosing to share. Quite simply, he liked the story.

And then he told another, this time one very much closer to home and, I'd venture, funnier.

Although he had not been to Canterbury for “30 or 40 years”, he did remember Cliftonville, and in particular Prices Avenue, where Aunt Ada had a boarding house.

“I used to go every year, from the age of four or five to the outbreak of war—at least six or seven years. My father had a motorbike with a sidecar and my mother would ride pillion, although she would end up pushing

it most of the time. Anyway, we did the journey from London in that once. Cousin Doreen was with us and had a hole burnt in her leg by acid dripping from the battery.”

Didn't she yell out what was happening?

“She was a very quiet child—never said very much at all.

“She sadly left this mortal coil last year... wonderful woman.”

“I have a terrible job hearing—I ask people to please speak up. I was in Edinburgh and didn't understand a word”

All this talk of church and mortal coils—is this a man with a strongly spiritual element?

“Yes, I'm a Christian,” said Sir Roger. “No, I'm not a regular churchgoer, like so many people today.

“I don't anticipate going to Heaven and being asked what I've been up to. It's more about living the right way. I'm opposed to the idea of hellfire and damnation, the religion of fear.”

The upcoming tour is his third, and what can the Marlowe audience expect in September?

“I don't know, we haven't worked it up yet. Whatever comes into my head—if I wander too far off the track, Gareth Owen [who hosts the event] pulls me back.

“I have a terrible job hearing—I ask people to please speak up. I was in Edinburgh and didn't understand

Continued on page 34 »

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« Continued from page 34

a damned word anybody said.

"There is a structure. I start at the beginning and wander off into the future, when the audience start to leave.

"There's my entrance into the world – a womb's-eye view of the world. My time at Jeffreys Road in Stockwell, various aspects of my childhood, my lack of education, my start in life, first jobs, my career, various stories about my productions.

"Are you still awake?"

The jovial self-mocking continues, as does the playful way he talks about his interaction with those fans who so revere him.

"I get asked a lot who my favourite character is, but I never answer unless I'm in a good mood. My age is a wonderful way of getting out of questions – I can plead insanity or go completely deaf.

"They ask if I actually turned into James Bond in the dressing room. They have to understand I just look like him – I was never James Bond."

We'll cut to the quick... how does he get on with Sean Connery, who also looked like James Bond, but of course before Sir Roger?

"I haven't seen him for a couple of years – I'm sure he's wrapped up with independence for Scotland. I heard he brought about the collapse of the banks when he withdrew his money in the crash.

"He was the best James Bond, up until Daniel Craig anyway, who I think is equal to him. Or perhaps slightly ahead, I don't know..."

There is, among the laid-back asides, a serious side to Sir Roger



Moore and in 1991 he was appointed a UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] Goodwill Ambassador. It was a role that he embraced with gusto – this was no notional exercise done with a shrug of the shoulders.

boards rarely happens these days – I would stand on the stage and forget every word

"I do a little less for UNICEF than I used to – I can't travel so much now.

"It's something for which I'm very grateful – for the first time since the late 1980s I was able to do

something that was important in life. I don't want to sound all po-faced about it, though.

"UNICEF is something very different. I've gone with Kristina to places that make us realise how fortunate we are in the West. There are places with no running water and where disease is rampant.

"I don't regret or resent for one moment the time we were able to give and the opportunity to speak about and raise awareness of the conditions some people face."

Alongside poverty, drought and famine, war continues to wreak its awful effects across the world and Sir Roger was particularly moved by the effects of the Kosovo conflict.

"You hear some terrible stories," he said. "It's good to be able to tell people about the nightmare others have experienced."

Such concerns put acting in its context, certainly, but does he still yearn for the spotlight?

"I do voice-overs," he said. "Stepping on the boards rarely happens these days – I would stand in the middle of the stage and forget every damned word.

"I am available, though, for roles as a corpse. I can do lying down."

And will there ever be a time Sir Roger chooses to no longer share his talents with the world?

"God will decide that, not me," he said, laughing as ever.

The show might go on for a long time yet.

■ An Evening With Sir Roger Moore is at The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, on Sunday, September 14, at 5pm. Tickets cost £25; phone the box office on 01227 787787 or visit www.marlowetheatre.com.



THE SPY WHO LOVED ME: Sir Roger's Bond, above, always had a pun at the ready for the bad guys. He is pictured with wife Kristina Tholstrup, left.

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Cats still the cream of musical theatre

As the nationwide tour of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's acclaimed show came to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre this month, **Chris Britcher** went along to see just what all the song and dance was about...

LIKE a plump, pampered moggy, the musical Cats would appear to become more loved and treasured as it gets older.

Its now comfortably on the wrong side of 30, yet its arrival on its latest UK tour – 12 years after it finally took its final curtain-call in the West End – still leaves audiences, excuse the predictable pun, purring.

And on a Monday night at The Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury the mood was certainly expectant.

When the theatre underwent its rebuild this is exactly the sort of major show it wanted to attract.

Cats may be past its prime, but it still packs a mighty punch on the stage and delivers big box office, its iconic yellow eyes staring out of all marketing a powerful brand.

There's certainly a healthy crowd for a Monday-night performance, especially given the free-to-air lure of a thrilling World Cup to tempt you to stay at home.

Few, it would appear, are Cats virgins – the songs and the costumes have, after all, been far from strangers to the British public since it first emerged to critical and commercial acclaim in 1981 and a then-record-



ON THE PROWL: Cats first hit the West End stage in 1981, going on to receive both commercial and critical acclaim

breaking run. And, as a consequence, this current production is, to a certain extent, on to a winner.

The crowd not only want to love it – many already do.

The good news is it was a glorious show, full of vim and vigor.

The set itself was deep and engaging – a complex rubbish dump that cleverly turned into a boat when

the story required it – the main characters memorable and distinctive and the music, well, you can't argue with Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, can you? He certainly knows how to pen a catchy tune.

The storyline is bordering – in truth – on the non-existent.

We meet some cats, and then one gets selected for a special honour.



The enduring and uplifting Jellicle Ball is the recurring theme of Part One as we meet the main protagonists, while Memories – the instantly recognisable classic – emerges to dominate Part Two.

For a show with a big reputation, the music at times appeared to lack a little of the dramatic thrust you would perhaps hope for, and as such it occasionally came perilously close to sounding a little dated and underwhelming.

But the dance numbers and songs were at times utterly breathtaking.

It would be churlish to undermine their efforts by suggesting they were let down by music needing a little additional 'oomph'.

As the performers skipped their way off the stage for frequent jaunts around the auditorium, there was even an impressive sense of engagement with the audience.

Not to mention a chance to marvel at the incredible costumes and make-up that transformed dancers into feisty felines.

As for those who had never seen it before, would they have been impressed? Well, I hadn't... and I was. ■ **Cats' run at The Marlowe Theatre concluded on Saturday, June 28.**

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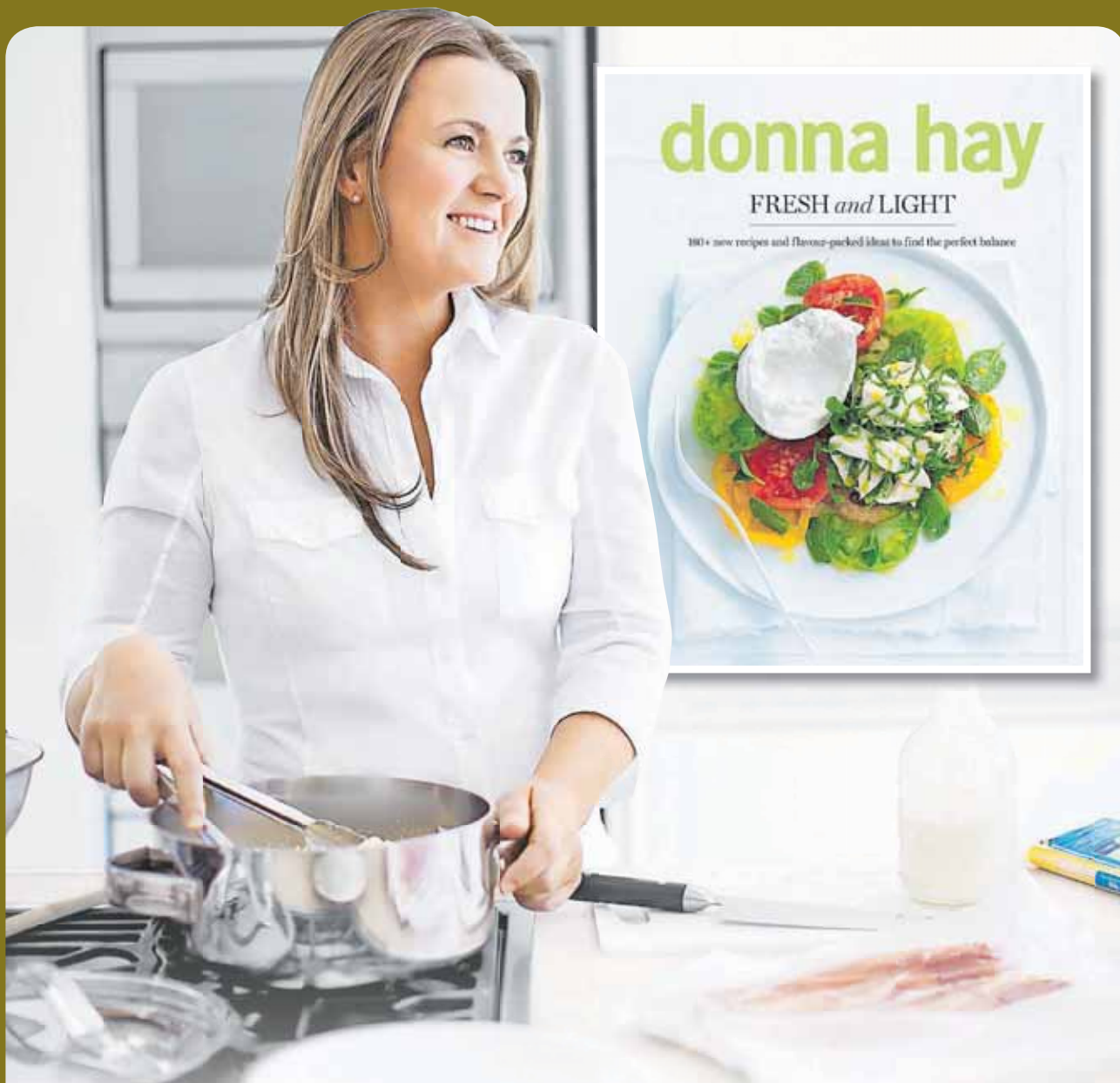
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KENT LIFE



Lightly does it for Donna

Donna Hay's new book goes against the rules of dieting, writes **Keeley Bolger**

THERE'S a certain feeling that leading Australian cookery writer Donna Hay gets from diet food... and it's not a good one.

It's "that taste", as well as "that look", the Sydney-based food stylist and best-selling author detests, along with many other things.

"I hate diets," says the mum-of-two, who regularly appears as a guest judge on MasterChef Australia and previously starred in her own series, Donna Hay: Fast, Fresh, Simple.

"I just don't like all rules and all the fuss that goes with diets. And all the missing out and all the bland-tasting food. Life is too short," she says.

With this in mind, Hay's new cookbook, *Fresh And Light*, focuses on flavoursome but wholesome food designed to appeal to everybody,

including those who are health-conscious or watching their weight.

"I call it my Monday to Thursday book, for when you want to fuel your body for a busy week and want to feel good about the things you eat," she says.

She regularly dishes up her own tasty creations to family and friends who come round for Sunday lunch, especially those who comply to a certain level of etiquette.

"I have really great friends who love me cooking for them and always do the washing-up," she says, laughing.

"I always think the best guests do the washing-up. They're the dream guests that bring a nice bottle of wine and stack the dishwasher... and always get invited back!"

When the tables are turned, however, and it's her friends' turn to cook for Hay, she admits that

they often "get in a little spin" about it. But they needn't worry – she may be a domestic goddess, but she's "happy with anything" and is more impressed by simplicity than complicated food.

"I see a lot of food during the week, so I just like really fresh

“I always think the best guests do the washing-up. They bring a nice bottle of wine and stack the dishwasher”

flavours and something simple," she says.

"I don't need really fussy food – I think that's what restaurants are for. Home cooking is different – it's about having time to catch up with

your friends and having a good laugh and unwinding.

"Keeping the food really simple is really fine with me."

Recently, however, Hay had a helping hand impressing guests when they came round for a barbecue. Her young son caught a fish and then shared the spoils of his catch.

"It was one of those perfect afternoons where I had some things to put on the barbecue, and he brought his little fish in," the proud mum recalls.

"One of the other dads gutted it and scaled it, because I can't stand that, and then he cooked his little fish on the barbecue. It was one of those perfect life moments."

Freshly-caught fish aside, the key ingredients to a good meal with friends are tasty, simple grub and lovely company, says Hay.



It's Wimbledon and the corks are popping and the fizz is flowing

PART summer party, part picnic, it's hardly surprising that the sound of corks popping at Wimbledon can be just as fast and furious as the volleys across the nets.

An epic event in the tennis calendar and watched by thousands of thirsty spectators, it may come as little surprise that 25,000 bottles of champagne and 200,000 glasses of Pimm's will be consumed during the fortnight of Grand Slam tennis.

But even if you can't get to the grounds, you can still sip with the big-hitters.

As the official champagne supplier to the Championships, Lanson has released two new limited-edition champagnes dressed in neoprene bottle sleeves stamped with the Wimbledon logo, cleverly designed to look like green and pink fluorescent tennis balls.

Depending on your taste, Champagne Lanson Brut NV Black Label, France (£33.99, Sainsbury's), is fresh and exuberant with a touch of toast and hazelnut and a crisp, long, citrusy finish, while Champagne Lanson Rose NV, France (£38.99, Sainsbury's), is generously fruity with refreshing red berry fruits and a hint of brioche to

Sam Wylie-Harris looks at the drinks to get you in the mood for the tennis... and for the whole of the summer, too

complement a punnet of English strawberries.

If you need any more convincing, both sparklers have been holding court across the tournament's hospitality tents for more than 25 years.

Australian winery Jacob's Creek, celebrating another year as the Official Wine of Wimbledon, has also been artistically inspired and has themed its limited-edition bottles to the players' all-white dress code.

Vino-lovers can choose between Jacob's Creek Classic Chardonnay 2013, South East Australia (£8.09, Tesco), which is lightly oaked with honeydew and juicy peach flavours, nice acidity and a clean finish to pair with smoked-salmon sandwiches, or the Jacob's Creek Classic Shiraz, South East Australia (£8.09, Tesco), which is a full-bodied, easy drinking red with berry notes on the nose and sweet caramel and spice flavours that linger on the tongue.

It goes exceptionally well with

hard cheeses, so pack your hamper well.

Few distillers have worked harder than Adnams Southwold Distillery (winners of the International Wine & Spirits Competition Gin Guild Trophy and Gold Outstanding for Adnams Copper House Distilled Gin) to improve their portfolio, and it has now introduced a new prosecco.

Adnams Southwold Prosecco, Treviso DOC, Italy (£9.99, www.adnams.co.uk), has a delicate nose of white flowers and tastes particularly fresh and fruity with honeyed notes of apples and peaches – a unanimous crowd-pleaser on a hot summer's day.

If you're looking for a long drink that captures the flavours of summer but that's a little more expressive and peppery than a Pimm's, try Sipsmith Summer Cup (£18.50, 50cl, Waitrose), which combines Sipsmith London Dry Gin with botanical notes, bergamot, cucumber and fragrant spice.



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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Shooting from the lip misses point

CAN I say how impressed I am with the editorial policy of KoS being prepared to print controversial matters that are shunned by less courageous local publications.

May I also refer to the 'Letter of the Week' [22.06] by Tony Harwood over the shooting of magpies.

Cllr Harwood's work with wildlife charities in the Maidstone area is most commendable. However, I must mention two points that need elucidation to benefit readers as Cllr Harwood is talking in strategic terms, quoting countywide scientific evidence rather than what is happening in our back gardens.

We all know that the reduction of habitat through man's desire to concrete the countryside results in a decline of songbirds.

It also makes it easier for magpies to find nest sites as they are more concentrated in less and less woodland.

Therefore the predations are more severe, resulting in more magpies than thrushes being seen in many areas of Kent, certainly in many people's gardens.

To stand by and watch a magpie taking fledgling tits from your nest boxes and flying off with eggs is criminal.

I cannot see Cllr Harwood standing by without reaching for the air-rifle if he saw this in his garden.

This is the reason that, along with other harmful birds, magpies are listed on the open licence, the others being crows, jackdaws, jays, parakeets – monk and ring-necked – and rooks.

The legal requirements under the Natural England Open Licence clearly state that an "authorised person" is defined as "no person on or after January 1, 2010, convicted of an offence... may use this licence".

The police take it a step further in the case of a gun being used, rather than netting or trapping.

They consider an authorised person to be a member of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation or the landowner and/or his representative with the necessary certification (if needed) to hold and use the weapon concerned.

If Mr Giltrap, whom Cllr Harwood is complaining about, owns his garden and uses a legally-held weapon, he is entitled to give himself permission to shoot harmful birds as listed, including magpies... assuming he has not committed a wildlife crime, as mentioned.

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Hidden agenda over Manston, Sir Roger?

I WONDER how much of the pressure being applied by Sir Roger Gale on Thanet District Council to serve a compulsory purchase order on Manston Airport is politically motivated [KoS, last week].

Labour-run Thanet council should think very carefully before exposing itself to any possible high-risk financial transaction with public money.

Imagine how damaging that would be to the administration. Which, I suspect, Sir Roger is only too aware of, too.

He's in the perfect position, where he sounds encouraging but in fact is potentially just teeing up the Labour administration to stumble.

As a Conservative MP, he

would, I'm sure, be pleased to see a blue council leader back in the council offices.

Surely now is the time to agree that Manston Airport is not a viable operation – it never has been.

Time and effort would be better spent investing in something that attracts visitors, creates jobs and has a better future than a small airport that talks big but has failed to ever deliver commercially.

I think the only thing everyone is in agreement with is that it shouldn't be turned into a giant housing estate. Thanet needs all the powers-that-be to unite and work together – regardless of political colour – to work for a brighter future for the area.

C Hunter, Broadstairs

Hope this clarifies the situation.

John Atkins,
Life member of the British
Association of Shooting and
Conservation

Time utility firms plugged the gap

THE £6 million pothole repair fund [KoS, last week] will not cover the cost of repairing holes in Kent roads, which are a danger to cyclists.

As so many of these appear where utility companies have dug holes, why is there no efficient monitoring of their work restoring the roads?

They can certainly afford to pay

for long-lasting restorations.

Marika Sherwood, Oare

'Secret' trade deal must not hit UK

IT'S a basic principle of democracy that governments should be able to make decisions in the interests of the people who elected them.

But the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) being negotiated between America and the EU puts this principle under serious threat.

This trade deal aims to set up a secretive 'court' in which multinational companies can sue

governments if they think a law might harm their profits.

For example, a tobacco company is currently using a similar court to sue the Australian government for billions of pounds because Australia introduced plain packaging for cigarettes. It is also suing Uruguay for simply putting a health warning on cigarette packets there.

I want the UK government to be able to make laws to protect the people of this country.

Diana Scott, Meopham

What goes around will come around

WHEN I see the media storm over Helen Grant's recent comments about the passport fiasco [KoS, last week], the phrase 'hoist with your own petard' comes to mind.

During recent elections, her party, along with the Tory press, continued to insist, quite falsely despite all the evidence to the contrary, that Ukup and especially its leader were racist.

Indeed her party colluded with all the other parties to shut down any rational discussions over the issues with Ukup.

Must be the only time they've all been together, one Question Time programme being an absolute disgrace and affront to freedom and democracy.

Maybe Helen Grant *et al* will learn that those who live by the media can also die by the media, but then having the approval of dilettante Dave must be another major drawback.

Phil Granger, West Malling

MP wrong to face media backlash

I DON'T think I have ever jumped to MP Helen Grant's defence before, but I do feel she has been unfairly criticised over her recent comments about the passports fiasco [KoS, last week].

As the tourism minister, surely her job is to promote the benefits of a holiday in the UK?

She was not doing so above and beyond the benefits of a foreign trip, but merely when asked about what people should do if they couldn't travel.

I think Mrs Grant has plenty of areas she could examine about her behaviour in office, but on this occasion I don't believe this is it.

Oh, and Jasper Gerard's pleasure at leaping on anything she does ahead of the next election is getting rather tiresome now.

L Smith, Maidstone

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

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- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between

news, comment and advertising.

- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
- 9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
- 10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.



Samphire Hoe, Dover

by **Rita Keatley**
from Canterbury

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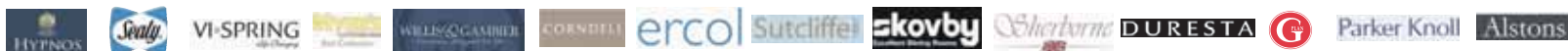
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TEXT IN NOW AND CHAT TO LOCAL PEOPLE. SEND: CHAT2 TO : 80098 (T&C'S BELOW)

FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 405297

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 366019

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLTm not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests. WLTm likeminded caring, happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 410127

CLARE 36yrs successful single mum, independent, employed with OHAC, size 10, green eyes, pretty, likes swimming, family life, seeking male with similar values and interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412053

SHARON 32yrs and still soul searching for Mr Right, I enjoy keeping in shape, caring for people, seeking loving respectful guy who also knows a good time. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412049

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SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box No: 408297

SLIM petite, attractive brunette, 56, British/Russian origin, excellent cook/home maker, seeks cultured male for serious relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412129

FREYA 33 6ft blonde, loves dancing and have a good time, employed, own home, one son, seeking similar laidback guy/dad for dates, chats and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412045

SUSIE, married, adventurous/dominant lady, 38yrs, seeks discreet man any age/area for no strings fun. Tel: 0905 002 1945 Box No: 412285

MARILYN really nice curvy tactile female, loves romantic walks, cosy nights in, quality times, looking for nice male to spend time and fall in love with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418771

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JAN 5ft 6ins, dark hair/eyes, nice smile, likes music, travel, countryside, animals, employed, OHAC, looking for companionship with similar lonely heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411865

SARAH 25 petite slim attractive blonde student, enjoys keeping fit, looking good, socialising, going out, being a mum WLTm similar fun genuine guy. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411537

BLONDE pretty, long legged, voluptuous, blue eyes, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410585

JULIE attractive outgoing female with a very young attitude, loves running, living life, travel, WLTm someone special to make my life complete, hope you're out there. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411513

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

LINDA 37, green eyes, attractive, bubbly size 12, enjoys cosy nights in, text chats, seeking tallish fun guy for meals out, pubs, clubs and spending quality times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411033

64YR old lady, seeking male for friendship, companionship, outings and interesting conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411975

CAROLINE 39yr old pretty blonde looking for handsome caring man to put the spark back into my life and make each other feel special. Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411891

33YR old sick of being single working mum, OHAC, likes the simple things in life, looking for romantic, honest guy with GSOH for cosy nights in and fun nights out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411887

CINDY 31 attractive, size 12 brown eyed blonde, new to this but sick of passing up potential soul mate so thought I'd give it a go. ACA Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411873

RITA divorced care worker with no ties, 5ft 11ins, dark hair, enjoys meals out, cosy nights in, seeking male 45-55 with GSOH and similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411775

JANET 5ft 8ins, slim 12, pretty, green eyes, brown hair, seeking male companion for friendship hopefully leading to a relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411689

MELANIE tall curvy attractive bubbly female who loves meals out, cosy nights in with a nice wine, walking, seeks professional male with outgoing GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411509

LYN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413

RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busty, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410835

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467

CATHY very much a lady seeks gent up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301

JAN 38yr old attractive lonely female looking for uncomplicated fun times only. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409107

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

WOULD you like to bounce into spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395

MARIE 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit/active, WLTm fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037

SOPHIE 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717

34YR single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410709

FLOR beautiful educated European blonde, articulate, seeking similar intelligent well-mannered mature gent to enjoy socialising, conversing and quality times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408293

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras.

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TEXT IN NOW AND CHAT TO LOCAL PEOPLE. SEND: CHAT2 TO : 80098 (T&C'S BELOW)

LOCAL man wishes to meet nice lady for friendship with a view to possible relationship. Respond if interested. Sevenoaks. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4334837

FRANK 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smoker, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893

COMPANY Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship. Kent/Surrey area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819

IAN 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717

MALE seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212

JAMES young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345

EX headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263

MALE 49, 5ft 10ins, likes cinema, reading, walks, seeks female in the Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412235

BESIDE the Pointe. Literate self-possessing, leggy, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223

45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

MALE 71, 5ft 10ins, medium build, NS, likes gardening, dogs, seeks female, 65-71 for friendship/companionship and outings. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411587

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

BUSTY Caribbean lady who loves music, dance and singing, looking for nice older guy for mutual adult no strings fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410305

RACHAEL 36yr old nurse looking to raise the temperature of reliable sincere male. I have my OACH, a single mum to 1, love gym, cosy meals, animals etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411045

SUSAN 29 green eyes, dark hair, slim, looking for Mr tall dark and handsome to take me out, enjoy adult times without complications just fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410957

KAREN blonde blue eyed slim 35yr old interesting female looking for good times, call me if I am in a similar situation, board and looking for some fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410719

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

TEXT: CHAT2 TO: 80098

START CHATTING TODAY!

*TEXT: 80098 Cost £1.50/msg received, for full T&Cs see below

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411

BROWN eyed white male, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351

ADAM 48, single dad, bored, seeking fun and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408421



DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411227

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

ATTRACTION white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Dover. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409533

FIT fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405857

RETIRED male, 66, 6ft 2ins, easy going, GSOH, loyal, loves pets, meals out, life, seeks lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407317

CHRIS 52, slim, looking for female, 25-38, slim, 5ft 2ins plus for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408575

DAVE 50, likes holidays, meals out, socialising, easy going, seeks female 40 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408541

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Medway area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855

STEVE 6ft 4ins, OHAC, seeking relationship, outdoor type, homey, wanting mutual good relationship with sexy woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407835

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355

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Business

The rising fear of many over interest rate hike

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

ONE in five south east businesses would struggle with an increase in interest rates over the next 18 months, a major survey has revealed.

Some 22 per cent of those quizzed admit if rates go up by just one per cent they would find themselves in financial difficulty.

Earlier this month Bank of England Governor Mark Carney dropped the heaviest hint yet that rates could start to rise as early as the end of this year.

The rate currently sits at 0.5 per cent – the lowest since its creation.

However, any immediate rise is expected to be gradual to soften the blow.

The findings come for a report by insolvency trade body R3 in its Business Distress Index – a long-running survey of a nationally representative sample of business owners and directors.

Its southern regional committee says that, despite the economic recovery over the last year, the figures show not all businesses are out of the woods yet.

Andrew Watling, chairman of the



RISK: Fears by some over rate rise

committee, said: "Economic recovery is just as tough a time for some businesses to negotiate as a recession, if not tougher.

"Normally, insolvencies peak after a recession, but we haven't seen that this time around. Record low interest rates and high levels of creditor forbearance have helped keep lots of businesses going.

"The good news is that some businesses that might have expected to struggle after 2008 have been given extra time to put their finances in order. However, there is still a big chunk of businesses that will struggle once 'normal' recovery conditions, like rising interest rates, return.

"A one percentage point rise in interest rates is at the upper limit of what we might expect in the next 18 months, but policymakers should bear in mind many businesses still feel they're close to the edge of their comfort zone."

Four per cent of businesses in the south east, compared with six per cent across the UK, say they would be put into 'serious' financial difficulty were interest rates to rise over the next 18 months, while 18 per cent regionally, 16 per cent nationally, said they would be put into 'some' difficulty.

However, the vast majority of businesses appear relaxed about the prospects of an interest rate rise, with some 66 per cent saying they would be unaffected.

Nine per cent of businesses, on the other hand, say they believe they would benefit from a rate rise.

Festival toasts brewery deal

LOUNGE on the Farm festival chiefs have signed a sponsorship deal with Faversham brewer Shepherd Neame to supply Oranjeboom at his year's special one-day event.

Taking place at Merton Farm on the edge of Canterbury on August 2, it extends the brewers support for the popular music event.

Oranjeboom and a special Lounge on the Farm Ale will be stocked at all bars at the ninth annual music festival.

Discovery Park is a fertile base

AUSTRALIAN fertility group Genea has been awarded an Expansion East Kent grant as it opens a manufacture and distribution base at the Discovery Park in Sandwich.

Genea's IVF technologies company Genea Biomedx and stem cell company Genea Biocells are setting up European headquarters and facilities to manufacture culture medium at the former Pfizer headquarters.

Winners celebrate after scooping top awards at ceremony

ORGANISERS of the Kent Excellence in Business Awards declared the event a success after Thursday night's event.

Staged at the Kent Event Centre in Detling, finalists in 15 categories discovered who had picked up an award.

Now in its sixth year, there were prizes for businesses and individuals as well as a special award for an outstanding contribution to the local business community.

The KeiBA winners were:

- Apprenticeship of the Year: Adam Calver, Allpark Ltd, Gravesend; Business Commitment to the Community: Countrystyle Recycling Ltd, Maidstone.
- Business Commitment to the Environment: Hadlow College, Tonbridge; Customer Service and Commitment: Sleeping Giant Media, Folkestone; Employer of the Year: European Insurance Services Ltd (EISL Ltd), Tunbridge Wells.
- Entrepreneur of the Year: Rob Knight, Ecoegg Ltd, Maidstone; Land Based Business of the Year: Fourayes Sittingbourne; Large Business of the Year: The Reynolds Group Ltd, Sittingbourne; Manufacturing Business of the Year: Integrated Technologies Ltd (ITL), Ashford.
- Science and/or Technology Business of the Year: Integrated Technologies Ltd (ITL), Ashford; SME Business of the Year: Elsatex Limited, Strood; Start Up Business of the Year: Bush Grub Ltd, Sittingbourne; Success in International Markets: ID&C Ltd, Tunbridge Wells; Tourism and Hospitality Business of the Year: Whiting and Hammond, Tonbridge.
- Young Entrepreneur of the Year: Bal Sandher, Hectic Lifestyles Ltd, Rochester
- The outstanding contribution award went to Nadra Ahmed, chairman of the National Care Association.

The awards were organised by Kent County Council alongside the KM Group.

Good News for Higher Rate Taxpayers!

Are you a Business Owner, Director or Partner running your own controlled limited company? Are you earning **£50,000 or more** every year in dividends and salary? If you answered **YES**, we have some **good news!** There is a way for you to **retain 82% of your income** having paid all the appropriate taxes!

Changes in the tax rules over the last few years now mean that there is a **considerable tax advantage** enjoyed by those who are taxed as self-employed compared to those who are taxed as employees.

The answer is closer than you may think, and it lies in **redefining your relationship with your business** with a consequent effect on the remuneration package you receive from it.

Business Owners and Directors deserve to see the results of their hard work in their pay packet, as they are the ones **creating**

jobs and helping to build the economy.

It is also a way of **retaining working capital** to assist the **growth of your business** or avoid relying unnecessarily on the business bank overdraft!

We can **assist Business Owners**, whether Directors or Partners, to benefit from this difference by structuring their remuneration so that it is taxable as income from self-employment.


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QUOTE: FR/RF-KOS

Free
Drinks
Champagne
Check-in

RIVIERA OF FLOWERS MONACO & PORTOFINO

Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departures
8 days, semi all inclusive, from **£799pp**
15 & 21 Sept, 2 Oct, 2014 • 13 April, 15 May, 19 & 25 Sept, 1 Oct, 2015

EXCURSIONS
INCLUDED

This super holiday, taking in the French & Italian Rivas, starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras famous Champagne Bar before an afternoon departure on Eurostar to Lille or Paris. After an overnight stay, we continue by TGV - the French high-speed train - to Nice then to Diano Marina on Italy's Riviera of Flowers, our base for this holiday. Enjoy free drinks every night at the hotel and excursions to Monaco, Eze, Portofino & Dolceacqua.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras
• Return rail travel from St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice
• 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille
• 6 nights in Diano Marina - half board PLUS free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night
• All excursions
• Transfers abroad



QUOTE: PB10-KOS

Champagne
check-in

PARIS, BAYEUX ARROMANCHES & MONT ST MICHEL

Escorted Holiday by Rail
6 days, **£599pp**
Departs 16 October, 2014

EXCURSIONS
INCLUDED

This super holiday begins with an overnight stay in Romantic Paris, including a Seine cruise and a guided tour. Bayeux, our base for the next 4 nights, is home to the famous tapestry, a unique historical document telling the story of William's conquest of England, including the Battle of Hastings. We will also take in the best of Normandy, including Arromanches with its remnants of D-Day's Mulberry harbour, stunning Mont Saint Michel, Deauville and Honfleur.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras
• Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Paris and Intercity to Bayeux
• 1 night hotel B&B in Paris
• 4 nights hotel B&B in Bayeux
• 2 dinners
• All excursions
• Transfers abroad

PARIS & PRIX DE L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE



QUOTE: PP10-KOS

Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure
4 days, **£369pp**
Departs 3 October 2014

CHAMPAGNE
CHECK-IN

The Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe is the flagship event of the European flat-racing calendar, attracting the world's finest thoroughbreds. The event is the wealthiest horse race in Europe with €2,000,000 going to the winner. Our break starts with a glass of bubbly at St Pancras' Champagne Bar before taking the Eurostar to Paris. Our Tour Manager will give you a real Parisienne adventure by metro, taking in Longchamps (race entry included), Notre Dame, Eiffel Tower and Sacre Coeur. We also visit the magnificent Chateau de Versailles (entry included) by coach.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout
• Champagne Check-in at St Pancras
• Return rail travel from St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Paris
• 3 nights hotel B&B in Paris
• Excursions as stated
• Admissions as stated
• Transfers abroad

FERRARI - LIVE THE DREAM IN MARANELLO



QUOTE: FE10-KOS

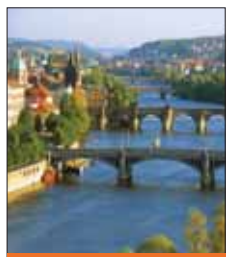
Escorted Holiday by Air from Gatwick
4 days, **£499pp**
Departs 16 October, 2014

OPTION
TO DRIVE A
FERRARI

Come with us to Maranello in Northern Italy - home to the most famous sports car maker in the world - Ferrari. Our 4-day tour takes in all the sights of Maranello including the Ferrari Museum, Fiorino Test Track, Enzo Ferrari Museum in Modena and more. No trip to Maranello would be complete without taking a Ferrari out for a spin. Test drives are possible at extra cost with options to drive a range of models, including the new California and the 550 Maranello.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad
• 3 nights B&B sharing a twin/double room at the 4-star Maranello Village Hotel
• Admissions to: The Ferrari Museum, The Enzo Ferrari Museum PLUS guided bus tour inside the Fiorino test-track proving grounds and Viale Enzo Ferrari
• Return Easyjet flights Gatwick to Bologna • Transfers abroad

PRAGUE EXPLORER



QUOTE: CZ10/3-KOS

Holiday by Air from Gatwick
5 days, **£499pp**
Departs 16 October, 2014 & 19 March, 2015

4-STAR
HOTEL

Prague is a magical city of bridges, cathedrals, gold-tipped towers and church domes mirrored in the surface of the swan-filled Vltava River. While the city's medieval centre remains wonderfully preserved, Prague is also a modern and vibrant city full of energy, music, art, culture and fine dining. We stay at the 4-star, Jurys Inn hotel in the heart of the city and include 2 guided city walking tours. There is also an optional visit to the town of Kutna Hora - former financial centre of Bohemia and a UNESCO world heritage site.

INCLUDED: Return flights from Gatwick - supp't may apply
• 4 nights stay at the 4-star Jurys Inn, central Prague
• 4 breakfasts & 2 dinners
• 2 half day, guided sightseeing tours in Prague
• Services of a Tour Manager in Prague
• Return airport-hotel-airport transfers

LAKE BLEĐ & CASTLE CHRISTMAS



QUOTE: BX12-KOS

Escorted Holiday by Air from Southend, Stansted or Gatwick
7 days, half board-plus **£789pp**
Departs 22 December, 2014

EXCURSIONS
INCLUDED

Christmas in Bled, Slovenia, is just magical - framed by the snow-capped peaks of the majestic Julian Alps, Bled is truly a dream festive location. The highlight will be Christmas Day Lunch in Bled Castle, perched atop a cliff 130 metres above the glacial Lake Bled with spellbinding views of the lake, the Karavanke mountains and the Julian Alps. We will also visit Ljubljana, Slovenia's charming capital, tranquil Lake Bohinj & the Mount Vogel cablecar, plus the opportunity to visit the epic Postojna Caves, Europe's most visited (supp't applies).

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad
• Return flights to Venice or Ljubljana with luggage from Southend, Stansted or Gatwick airports - supp't may apply
• 6 nights stay at the 3-star Astoria Hotel in Bled
• 6 breakfasts and 4 buffet dinners + 1 Traditional Slovenian buffet dinner + 1 Candlelit dinner with music & wine
• Christmas day lunch in Bled Castle
• Excursions & Transfers abroad

VENICE CARNIVAL, FLORENCE & CHIANTI



QUOTE: VF2-KOS

Escorted Holiday by Rail
9 days, **£999pp**
Departs 12 February, 2015

EXCURSIONS
INCLUDED

Venice Carnival is spectacular with costume parades, Gondola sailing, streets artists, acrobats and musicians and characters from the Comedia del Arte. The atmosphere is truly electric! We travel by rail from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Venice with an overnight stop in Turin on the way out and Geneva on the way back. Enjoy 3 nights in Venice, including a guided walking tour and a 2-day waterbus ticket. We continue by rail to the Renaissance city of Florence for a 3 night stay with a guided walking tour and visit to the Chianti region with wine tasting.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout
• Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Venice, returning from Florence
• Overnight B&B hotel stays outbound and return
• 3 nights B&B in Venice Mestre
• 3 nights B&B in Florence
• 6 dinners • All excursions
• Transfers abroad

RIVIERA OF FLOWERS & GARDENS & PORTOFINO



QUOTE: FF6-KOS

Escorted Holiday by Rail - afternoon departure
8 days, semi-all-inclusive **£949pp**
Departs 6 June, 2015

FREE DRINKS
CHAMPAGNE
CHECK-IN

This super floral sojourn starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras' famous Champagne bar before an afternoon departure on Eurostar to Paris or Lille. After an overnight stay we continue by TGV train to Nice then to Diano Marina on Italy's Riviera of Flowers, our base for this holiday. On the Riviera we visit Monaco and its Jardin Exotique, the Villa & Jardins Ephrussi de Rothschild, Hanbury Gardens, Serre de la Madone garden, and Portofino. We also enjoy Free Drinks every night at our hotel.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras
• Return rail travel from St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice
• 1 night hotel B&B in Paris or Lille
• 6 nights in Diano Marina's Piccolo Hotel - half board PLUS free drinks 6pm to 11pm every night
• All excursions & garden entry
• Transfers abroad

Note: Price of Cruises and/or Holidays by Air subject to cabin and/or flight availability at time of booking - supplement may apply

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

1st Drive

Mercedes-Benz C-Class

Price: from £26,855
Driving appeal: ★★★★★
Image: ★★★★★
Space: ★★★★★
Value: ★★★★★
Running costs: ★★★★★
How green?: ★★★★★
Best rival: BMW 3 Series

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HEAD-TURNER: Mercedes' new C-Class is a worthy successor to the original, with a better interior and styling that even makes the estate look good

Starting new C-Class chapter

AS SOON as a car is launched, the clock starts ticking for its replacement – and that successor's arrival is usually timely.

But not so with the outgoing Mercedes-Benz C-Class – it died before its time.

Launched in 2007, it showed how M-B had taken notice of the rival BMW 3 Series and Audi A4 models at last, then thought deeply about how to get back into the vitally important compact executive car sector.

The result was a car that drove as well as it looked: an excellent all-rounder with a chassis to suit virtually all situations – and now it's gone.

But the new C-Class (from £26,855) is a worthy successor.

Again, M-B has taken nothing for granted, so the new car looks smart and suitably upmarket and feels well thought out, with up to 100 kilos – or a tubby British bloke's weight – saved thanks to extensive use of light yet strong aluminium construction.

There is a definite upweight in cabin quality, though, particularly on the dashboard, even if the 'jet intake' vents feel a little cheap.

It's a comfortable place to be and the centre-console infotainment interface falls nicely to hand and works well, too.

Head and legroom in the back is very good for this class, though the

It was a sad end to the previous part of the Mercedes-Benz C-Class story, but we are getting a racy start to the next one

former is slightly restricted if the car has the panoramic roof option fitted, while the boot is on a par with its two aforementioned rivals.

Out on the road, the C-Class is even more competent than its accomplished predecessor, at least with the air suspension or Agility Control – I wasn't able to drive an example with the standard set-up.

Agility Control and its complementary Agility Select system allow the car to be quickly adjusted to suit road conditions or driver mood.

It can be switched from ultra-frugal Eco mode, through Comfort and Sport up to Sport+, or even adjusted manually to set up Individual mode.

Impressive stuff, with everything weighting up for the sports modes and showing that the new C-Class can really be pushed hard along a winding road, even if the steering always feels a bit light.

Sound-deadening for the engine and bodywork is so good that only a slight whisper from wind and tyre noise intrudes on limo-like comfort levels, even when exploring the limits of Sport+.

I tried two versions of the car, both using the 2.143cc diesel that will be the mainstay of the range – one with 170bhp and the other with 204bhp.

Thanks to the car's light weight and nimbleness, the lower-powered car C220 Bluetec still has enough urge to suit most owners and, in popular Sport trim, looks good value at £32,860.

It will hit 62mph in just 7.4 seconds without much fuss yet return 65.7mpg on the official combined cycle, while CO₂ emissions of 110g/km – which means just £20 a year road tax after a free ride in year one.

Obviously, climbing out of that into the C250 Bluetec AMG (£35,510), you get an even livelier show – 0-62mph in 6.6 seconds while offering the same economy and only slightly increased emissions.

And, of course, racy AMG trappings give the car more company-car-park swank, though the new C-Class is such a handsome-looking car from all angles that add-ons don't seem to make that much difference – even the estate looks sharp.

Other view...

the Petrolhead

Impressive looks and tech mean this could just be the car to threaten the BMW 3 Series' long-standing supremacy in this sector.

She says

I admire the new C-Class styling particularly, and I've always like the Mercedes-Benz brand's extra class – no pun intended.

the Eco-warrior

I'm impressed by the frugality and low emissions of the C-Class launch engines and this can only improve as more choice arrives.



Fleet dreams are made of this

And who are we to disagree? Our best-in-class Drive-E D4 engine is a 4-cylinder engine that delivers impressively low emissions, but with the power and performance of a 6-cylinder. In fact, our engine produces an outstanding 181hp from only 99g/km CO₂ and 74.3mpg combined,* figures that BMW, Audi and Mercedes can't even match on comparable models. Since the balance between power and efficiency is something everybody's looking for, it's nice to know with our S60, V60 and XC60 nothing is compromised.

The New Volvo V60 and S60 from 99g/km

Book a test drive at Lipscomb Volvo Centres in Canterbury and Maidstone today

Official fuel consumption for The New Volvo D4 FWD manual and auto in MPG (l/100km): Urban 50.4 (5.6) – 65.7 (4.3), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5) – 78.5 (3.6), Combined 57.6 (4.9) – 74.3 (3.8). CO₂ Emissions 129 – 99g/km. MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results.

*Volvo S60 D4 manual 181hp, 99g/km CO₂, 74.3mpg combined. Audi A4 2.0TDi 177hp, 134g/km CO₂, 55.4mpg combined. BMW 320d 184hp, 120g/km CO₂, 61.4mpg combined. Mercedes C220 CDI 170hp, 109g/km CO₂, 68.9mpg combined. *Volvo V60 D4 manual 181hp, 99g/km CO₂, 74.3mpg combined. Audi A4 Avant 2.0TDi 177hp, 139g/km CO₂, 53.3mpg combined. BMW Touring 320d ED 163hp, 112g/km CO₂, 65.7mpg combined. Mercedes C220 CDI Estate 170hp, 114g/km CO₂, 65.7mpg combined. All figures confirmed by manufacturers own websites as at 20/12/13.

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The new C-Class Saloon combines cutting-edge technology, outstanding performance and stylish design to create a one-of-a-kind experience.

Representative Example: C 200 Sport Saloon with Metallic Paint

36 Monthly payments of*	£329.00
On The Road Price	£29,495.00
Customer deposit	£5,447.68
Retailer deposit contribution	£680.42
Optional purchase payment†	£14,125.00
Amount of credit	£23,366.90
Total amount payable‡	£32,372.10
Acceptance fee	£180.00
Purchase activation fee	£95.00
Fixed Interest Rate	4.57%
Representative APR 5.2%	

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Mercedes-Benz

Official government fuel consumption figures in mpg (litres per 100km) for the C-Class range: urban 15.2(18.6)-54.3(5.2), extra urban 33.2(8.5)-80.7(3.5), combined 23.2(12.2)-68.9(4.1). CO₂ emissions 285-109 g/km. Whilst this offer is only available through Mercedes-Benz Finance, we do arrange finance on behalf of other finance companies as well. Model featured is a Mercedes-Benz new C 200 AMG Line Saloon with automatic transmission at £35,130.00 on-the-road including optional 19" AMG Alloy wheels at £595.00, 360° camera at £335.00, LED Intelligent Light System at £545.00, metallic paint at £645.00, panoramic glass sunroof at £900.00 and privacy glass at £265.00. *Based on a Mercedes-Benz Agility agreement and 10,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charges may apply. †Payable if you exercise the option to purchase the car. ‡Includes optional purchase payment, purchase activation fee and Retailer deposit contribution. Alternative contract lengths and mileage available. Images featured include non standard options not included in the finance example. Some combinations of features/options may not be available. Vehicles must be credit approved between 26 June 2014 and 31 July 2014 and registered by 30 September 2014. Credit provided subject to status from Mercedes-Benz Financial Services UK Ltd, MK15 8BA. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. Offer subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other published Retailer offers. Prices correct at time of going to print. Mercedes-Benz UK Ltd. is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 2448457 and has its registered office address at Tongwell, Milton Keynes, MK15 8BA.

main dealer Servicing



TAKE GOOD CARE: Hyundai's i30, above, has a five-year warranty, but to enjoy it and keep it roadworthy you need to keep the car properly serviced

Buy a car... then look after it

CAR-BUYERS spend a considerable time on car choice, only to then neglect it. But it is vital the vehicle is serviced and repaired promptly and competently.

The traditional guarantee used to be a full main dealer service history (FMDSH), a reassuring record that everything required for the manufacturer's warranty had been carried out.

But 2002 EU legislation decreed this was a restrictive practice and made it illegal for manufacturers to insist that only franchised networks could maintain the warranty.

Manufacturers also had to make vehicle diagnostics – crucial with increasingly sophisticated vehicles – specialist tools and updates available to independent garages and servicing centres.

Nevertheless, market sentiment still places a premium on a FMDSH;

used-car-buyers will usually pay more for a car with this 'ticket' – especially on premium models.

One could argue that this perceived premium is wiped out by higher main dealer service costs, but this over-simplifies the picture; with car sales and profits squeezed during the recession, dealers became more competitive on servicing, customer service and ancillaries like tyres, exhausts and air-con top-ups – normally the

preserve of quick-fit centres.

They also bank on the perception that only a main dealer's technicians can know their brand's cars as well they do, while 'all makes' centres must spread expertise across many models.

And dealers know that happy-service customers keep coming back, each time seeing newer models just feet from the service desk – one day soon, they may be buying again.

SIMPLY CLEVER

ŠKODA



PEOPLE AND PRICES...

...well worth knowing

We believe that ŠKODA servicing and maintenance is best carried out by real people who take real pride in what they do – people who eat, drink and sleep ŠKODAS. We also firmly believe that our prices should be just as genuine – where the price you see is the price you'll pay.

Servicing

MOT Available only on the UK mainland	
All models	£39

Minor service Every 12 months or 10,000 miles	
All models	£139

Major service Every 24 months or 20,000 miles	
All models	£259

Maintenance

Front brake pads	
Fabia	£99
Other models (not Fabia or vRS)	£115
vRS	£135

Rear brake pads	
Fabia	£99
Other models (not Fabia or vRS)	£115
vRS	£135

Cambelt change*	
Fabia	£299
Other models	£359

Battery	
Fabia	£99
Other models (not Fabia or vRS)	£109
vRS	£129

Front brake pads & discs	
Fabia	£199
Other models (not Fabia or vRS)	£215
vRS	£249

Rear brake pads & discs	
Fabia	£199
Other models (not Fabia or vRS)	£215
vRS	£249

Cambelt & waterpump*	
Fabia	£399
Other models	£459

Clutch	
Fabia	£429
Other models	£489
4x4	£599

Aircon service	
All models	£75

Brake fluid change	
All models	£49



For ŠKODA vehicles 3 years (from first MOT) up to 10 years old, excluding V6 models. National Pricing is available to customers at participating ŠKODA retailers only. All prices are (where applicable) inclusive of standard parts, labour, oil and VAT and come with a two-year parts and labour warranty. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Further terms and conditions apply, please ask your ŠKODA retailer for details. *Includes cambelt, tensioners and rollers as required.

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Dealers hit back at 'quick-fit' trend

IT'S tempting to try to save on motoring bills by using a local 'quick/fast-fit' centre.

These have blossomed as drivers try to save money on motoring 'consumables': exhausts, tyres, batteries, clutches, shock-absorbers, air-conditioning checks and routine services, plus the annual MOT.

But main dealers have responded, reckoning that if car-owners are still using their service bays, they'll consider realistic deals on tyres and exhausts, for instance, to ensure a time-saving one-stop shop purchase.

Using the main dealer also guarantees that only genuine manufacturers' parts are used, bringing the confidence of additional quality and reliability.

And that same guarantee, plus realistic pricing, has encouraged getting bodyshop repairs done either by the franchise or one that gets its seal of approval.

Main dealers have also borrowed from their quick-fit rivals by offering menu pricing; a customer can decide what he wants and knows in advance what it will cost.

Some dealers will let you spread the cost via a finance or servicing scheme covering several years.

They may also offer a loyalty scheme to keep owners of older models on their books rather than see them defect to the non-franchised sector because those owners believe that their car's lower value does not warrant the higher perceived cost of main dealer servicing.

Another trick borrowed from the



DEALS ON WHEELS: It is worth checking whether your main dealer can offer a competitive price and one-stop shop if you damage tyres or an exhaust on your new Skoda Yeti, pictured left, or Renault Clio, above

quick-fit sector is longer opening hours; dealers now realise some customers want to drop off their car early on the way to work and then pick it up at the end of the day – a courtesy car may even be offered.

Centralised bookings can often be made, too, so that customers living midway between franchised dealers within the same group can pick the most convenient service slots available.

No sweat.

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 **HYUNDAI** NEW THINKING. NEW POSSIBILITIES.



What's in a warranty?

FOR years, the standard car warranty was three years and/or 60,000 miles, but a recent outbreak of 'warranty wars' between carmakers has seen both the years and mileages increase.

That's a good enough reason for car-buyers to shop around anyway, but some of the new deals also reinforce the old adage: check the small print.

This will confirm exactly what the manufacturer will and will not pay for if the car breaks down within the

agreed time period or mileage.

And this makes it imperative that the co-owner also sticks to the rules by keeping the car serviced according to the warranty, also taking note of and acting upon any recall notices for unforeseen faults and problems.

Some brands are more lenient about late servicing than others, but a common pitfall is to have the car serviced only by mileage, when most manufacturers also insist that the car is serviced annually if the required miles are not being covered.

Fact is, an underused car or one

that does lots of short hops, can need as much attention as one that covers 'starship miles' on the motorway.

You don't have to use a franchised dealer for servicing – this stipulation was thrown out by EU legislation in 2002 – but do check for caveats in any case.

Be aware also that some marques offer the chance to extend the warranty for a reasonable cost or will 'wind back' the warranty clock to start again if you buy an approved used example from one of their dealers – not a bad option.



READ THE SMALL PRINT: New models like the slick all-new Peugeot 308, top left, and Renault Captur, top right, still need their warranties upheld

SIMPLY CLEVER

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Superb from
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PAYMENT

Motorline ŠKODA Canterbury Vauxhall Ind Est., Westminster Road CT1 1YY

0843 658 2604 www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). Advance Payment (AP) valid for applications to Motability until 30 September 2014. Models shown are Citigo 3 door SE 1.0 MPI 60PS manual with optional metallic paint (£490), Style Pack 2 with 15" Auriga alloys and temporary spare wheel (£550) and Winter Pack incl. front fog lights, heated front seats and electrically adjustable door mirrors (£300). Fabia Hatch shown is SE 1.2 12V 69PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525), black protective side moulding (£50), 16" Elba alloy wheels (£230), front fog lights (£170). Model shown is a Rapid Spaceback 1.2 TSI 105PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525), protective side mouldings (£75), panoramic glass roof (£700) and 17" Camelot alloy wheels (£600). Rapid shown is Elegance 1.2 TSI 105PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525) and protective side moulding (£75). Roomster shown is S 1.2 12V 69PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525), front fog lights (£170), Black roof rails (£230) and black protective side moulding (£50). Octavia shown is Elegance 1.6 TDI 105PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525), bi-xenon headlights, AFS and LED daytime running lights (£1,900) and 18" Golus alloy wheels (£350). Yeti shown is Outdoor Elegance 1.2 TSI 105PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525) and part-silver roof rails (£160). Superb shown is Elegance 2.0 TDI 140PS manual with optional metallic paint (£525). Selected models only available from stock. Models shown are not UK specification. Urban 21.7 (13.0) to 74.3 (3.8), Extra Urban 40.4 (7.0) to 94.2 (3.0), Combined 30.4 (9.3) to 88.3 (3.2). CO₂ emissions for the ŠKODA range 217 to 85g/km. Standard EU Test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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motability.co.uk

Not sure if you qualify for a Motability car? Call 0800 953 4002



KEEP A CHECK: Modern motors like the Hyundai i10 city car, left, Nissan Qashqai crossover, centre, and Skoda Citigo, right, need professional care, but there's no need to be careless yourself

MODERN cars are more reliable and comfortable than ever before.

But much less can be done by the DIY mechanic, so keeping the car in a reliable and safe condition is now best left to professionals and, of course, it costs.

Unfortunately, this also means owners often ignore problems for too long and servicing is stretched beyond recommended parameters, risking the car's warranty and provenance when you come to sell.

So:

- Get it serviced at the correct mileages or annually and

What you can do to help

have the servicing book stamped up, although some motor marques are switching to centralised digital records

- Check the warranty – ensure there are no possible pitfalls that could endanger the guarantee
- Act on any recalls from the manufacturer for checks or replacements – it will help maintain the warranty and

future saleability of the car

- Don't rely on the MOT certificate to assure the car's safety and reliability
- Problems can arise at any time, so you should get them checked immediately
- Check lights and tyres regularly for safety and legality. The latter must be at the correct pressures as listed in the handbook or on a

sticker often placed on the driver's door-frame. Legal tread depth is 1.6mm, but most motoring authorities advise replacement at 2mm, especially in winter

- Keep oil, washer, coolant, power-steering, clutch and brake-fluid levels topped up without over-filling, and make those checks on level ground. Don't wait for warning lights

– it could be too late to prevent damage or may compromise safety. Don't be caught out

- There is little point in keeping the washer topped up if wiper-blades are worn or split. And if the windscreen is covered with bugs and grease, don't expect the washer and wipers to do the job for you – use a spray and elbow grease
- Shop around for servicing. Even if you are committed to main dealer servicing, you don't have to use the one where you bought the car – some are better on pricing and customer service than others.

Great Motability offers from Peugeot

NEW 3008 ACTIVE 1.6 HDi 115 5 door
£499 ADVANCE PAYMENT*

- 17" alloy wheels • Rear parking aid
- Automatic headlights and wipers
- Cruise control with speed limiter



NEW 2008 ACCESS+ 1.4 HDi 70
NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT*

- Radio CD player • Air-conditioning
- Electric front windows • Cruise control



PEUGEOT 3008 ACTIVE / 2008 ACCESS+

The new Peugeot 2008 Access+ is now available through Motability with NIL Advance payment. Or choose the Peugeot 3008, for an Advance payment of just £499. You'll even get insurance, breakdown cover, servicing and maintenance included for 3 years. Contact us today to find out more.

MOTION & EMOTION



MOTORLINE CANTERBURY

Broad Oak Road, CANTERBURY, CT2 7PX
01227 451791 www.motorline.co.uk/peugeot

Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km) for the 3008 range are: Urban 30.4 – 78.5 (9.3 – 3.6), Extra Urban 51.4 – 91.1 (5.5 – 3.1), Combined 40.9 – 83.1 (6.9 – 3.4) and CO₂ 159 – 88 (g/km); 2008 range are: Urban 32.1 – 68.9 (8.8 – 4.1), Extra Urban 54.3 – 78.5 (5.2 – 3.6), Combined 43.5 – 74.3 (6.5 – 3.8) and CO₂ 150 – 98 (g/km).

MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. *£499 and Nil Advance payment subject to availability and on selected models only. Offer available on cars ordered by 30th June 2014. Information and offers correct at time of going to press. Models shown for illustrative purposes only. For full terms & conditions, please contact the Peugeot Motability line on 0845 945 5466. Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

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EXPRESS SERVICE & MOT QUOTATION

CUSTOMER NAME
ADDRESS LINE 1
ADDRESS LINE 2
ADDRESS LINE 3
POSTCODE

QUOTATION NUMBER	123456789
DATE	March 2014
ACCOUNT NUMBER	987654321
YOUR REF.	159753
OUR REF.	357951
DEALER NAME	DEALER

QTY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	RENAULT EXPRESS SERVICE AND MOT	1	£159.00
1	100% PEACE OF MIND	1	£00.00
1	WHILE-YOU-WAIT APPOINTMENTS	1	£00.00
1	QUALIFIED RENAULT TECHNICIANS	1	£00.00
1	ONLY RENAULT-APPROVED PARTS FITTED	1	£00.00
1	1-YEAR GUARANTEE ON ALL PARTS & LABOUR	1	£00.00
1	FREE PRODUCT & SOFTWARE ENHANCEMENTS	1	£00.00
1	FREE MOT RETEST	1	£00.00
SUB TOTAL			£159.00

TOTAL TO PAY, ONLY £159.00

RENAULT SERVICE* & MOT** FROM ONLY £159.

All prices quoted are manufacturer recommended retail prices including VAT at the prevailing rate for Renault cars over 4 years old. All prices are correct at time of publication and may be subject to change at any point without notice. All offers exclude the Z.E. range. Available at participating dealers only. Offers applicable to New Renault Service Department customers. *Includes an oil & filter replacement and a 25-point visual inspection. Additional parts may be required according to the maintenance programme of your vehicle (not included in the stated price). Excludes LCVs and V6 engines. **Excludes Northern Ireland and class 7. Offer ends 30 September 2014.

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CANTERBURY CT1 1YY
TEL 0844 822 7100

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HILTON ROAD
ASHFORD TN23 1EW
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Swale Academies Trust



Westlands School

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Teaching Assistants

Required for September 2014

Salary £13,162 - £16,305 p.a. (paid pro rata to hours worked)

Term time only, hours to be worked over 5 days

Two posts are available, a permanent role for 27 hours per week as a Teaching Assistant, to support pupils, who have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), across the curriculum. A particular interest in the areas of mathematics and / or science would be an advantage.

The second post is a temporary role for 32.5 hours per week, for a Teaching Assistant who should possess the necessary skills to assist with the welfare of physically disabled pupils with varying needs. Duties may include toileting, dealing with health problems which occur during the day, physiotherapy exercises as directed by the physiotherapist, helping with movement around the school and support within the classroom as necessary.

Applicants should have the necessary skills to support in mainstream classes, in small groups or on an individual basis. Candidates would be expected to have good literacy and numeracy skills, and as part of the interview, may be asked to demonstrate their skills in supporting pupils.

Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online (www.westlands.org.uk). Please note that we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Closing date: Wednesday 9 July 2014 at noon.

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461

Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA



Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS



"We grow people"

Abbey Court School provides a stimulating, challenging and safe learning environment where pupils and staff efforts, work and achievement are celebrated.

**We are currently looking for a
Temporary Teacher for pupils with severe
and profound learning difficulties**

September 2014 up to July 2015

(options available)

MPS/UPS + SEN

Abbey Court School is currently located in pleasant surroundings on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery & Primary) and Strood (Secondary & Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. The school has been judged 'outstanding' in the last 2 Ofsted inspections.

This post would suit newly qualified teachers, or those wishing to gain further experience of SEN. Comprehensive induction and training will be provided. Telephone enquiries and informal visits to the school welcomed

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Closing Date: 11th July 2014

For further details and a job description, please contact Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP (01634 338236), stating the position for which you are applying.



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"An outstanding school" (Ofsted July 2010 & October 2012)

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Abbey Court is located on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery and Primary) and Strood (Secondary and Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties. Working hours are 32.5 p/w (8.45am - 3.45pm), term time only. Comprehensive training and induction will be provided.

Only those with childcare experience, or relevant childcare qualifications should apply.

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone (stating the role for which you are applying):

Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent. ME2 3SP (01634 338236)

Please note CVs will not be accepted.

Closing date: 9.7.14

We Require:

x 1 Team Leader

c. £35K

x 2 Logistics Co-ordinators

(4 on 4 off days)

x 1 Logistics Co-ordinator

(4 on 4 off nights) both c. £24K

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The Team Leader role requires strong planning and organisation abilities, excellent communication skills and a hands-on approach in order to lead and support a team.

Please apply via email and send your CV to:
sarah.brown@priorityfreight.com

Career opportunities at MidKent College

Lecturer in Electrical Installation

We are looking for an experienced, well-qualified and inspirational Lecturer to join our successful Electrotechnical team at the College's newly refurbished Maidstone campus.

If you are able to deliver high quality teaching across the range of our full-time and apprenticeship programmes from Level 1 to level 3, are driven to improve the learning and career prospects of all learners and enjoy working flexibly as part of a team we would be pleased to receive your application.

Candidates must hold qualified teacher status (or be prepared to work to achieve this) and have good written and verbal communication skills.

Please contact job.applications@midkent.ac.uk for an application pack

Closes 09/07/14

Salary £23,239 - £34,063 (depending on qualifications & experience)



Swale Academies Trust

Westlands School

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Office Assistant

Required as soon as possible

25 hours per week, over 5 days, 8.30 am - 1.30pm
Term time plus three weeks in the school holidays.

£13,512-£14,526 per annum pro rata, dependent on experience (equivalent to £8,254- £8,874 p.a.)

This successful secondary school is seeking an Office Assistant to join its effective and dedicated team of Administration staff. Primary duties will be that of Receptionist.

The successful applicant will be the first point of contact for visitors and callers to the school, and will need to demonstrate personal qualities such as excellent communication skills and the ability to remain polite and professional at all times. Applicants should also have some experience of working in a customer service environment or in a busy office.

Other duties will include clerical tasks; therefore a working knowledge of Microsoft Office packages is required.

Recruitment packs including a person specification and job description are available from Westlands School or online (www.westlands.org.uk). Please note that we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Applicants should also include a covering letter detailing how they meet the person specification.

Closing date: Wednesday 9 July 2014.

Swale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced CRB check.

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461

Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA



Swale Academies Trust Company No 7344732
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR KENT AND CHIEF CONSTABLE OF KENT

Audit of Accounts: Year Ended 31 March 2014 Public Inspection of Accounts and Right of Challenge

Audit Commission Act 1998, sections 15-16

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 sections 9, 10, 21, 22 & 24

The accounts for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and the Chief Constable of Kent are subject to external audit by Miss D. Hanson, Ernst & Young LLP, 400 Capability Green, Luton, LU1 3LU (Telephone 01582 643008). Members of the public and local government electors have certain rights in the audit process:

1. From Monday 14th July to Friday 8th August (inclusive) between 10am and 4pm (Monday to Friday) any person interested may inspect and make copies of the draft accounts of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and the Chief Constable of Kent for the year ended 31 March 2014 and certain related documents (comprising books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts). The accounts and other documents will be available for inspection at the offices at which they are normally kept. Any alternative arrangement would need to be agreed in advance. Application should be made initially to Mr P. Curtis, Acting Chief Finance Officer to the Chief Constable, Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 9BZ, Tel: 01622 652761.
2. From 10am on 11th August until the conclusion of the audit process, a local government elector for the area of Kent, or his/her representative, may ask the auditor questions about the accounts. Please contact the auditor, Miss Hanson, at the address given above to make arrangements to ask any questions.
3. Questions may be received by Mr S. Nolan, Chief Finance Officer of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9BZ, (Telephone 01622 677055) or Mr P. Curtis, Acting Chief Finance Officer of the Chief Constable, Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 9BZ, (Tel: 01622 652761) by prior arrangement with the auditor, Miss D. Hanson, at the address given above to whom requests for this purpose should be addressed.
4. From 10am on 11th August until the conclusion of the audit process, a local government elector for the area of Kent, or his/her representative, may object to the accounts asking that the auditor issue a report in the public interest (under section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998) and/or apply to the court for a declaration that an item in the accounts is contrary to law (under section 17 of the Audit Commission Act 1998). Written notice of a proposed objection and the grounds on which it is made must be sent to the auditor, Miss D. Hanson, at the address given above and copied to Mr S. Nolan and Mr P. Curtis at the addresses given above.
5. No objection may be made unless the auditor, Miss D. Hanson, at the address given above has previously received notice in writing of the proposed objection and its grounds. Copies of this notice must be sent to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent care of Mr S Nolan and Chief Constable of Kent care of Mr P. Curtis at the addresses given above.

Dated: 19th June 2014

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent
Kent Police Headquarters,
Sutton Road,
Maidstone, Kent.
ME15 9BZ

Mr Sean Nolan
Chief Finance Officer of the
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent Police
Telephone 01622 677055

Kent Police
Headquarters,
Sutton Road,
Maidstone, Kent.
ME15 9BZ

Mr Paul Curtis
Chief Finance Officer of the
Chief Constable of Kent
Telephone 01622 652761

Community Right to Bid Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons

Notification of intention to dispose of an Asset of Community Value

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has been notified, by the owners of the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons, of their intention to dispose of the property, which is listed as an Asset of Community Value in the borough.

A six week moratorium period will close on 4 August 2014 during which time a community group can request, in writing to the Council, to be treated as a potential bidder for the property. If such a request is received by the Council, the moratorium period will be extended to a full 6 months, giving time for a bid to be put together.

Further information on the Community Right to Bid can be found on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website at:
<http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/community/community-rights/community-right-to-bid>
or contact: business@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

To place your notice
here call the
Kent Public Notice
team on
01303 817056

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116

STOPPING UP OF LAND AT YEW TREES VIEWING AREA, GREEN HILL WOOD / LONDON ROAD, WROTHAM, KENT

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates sitting at Maidstone Magistrates Court on 14 August 2014 at 14:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Yew Trees Viewing Area, Green Hill Wood / London Road, Wrotham, Kent as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrate's Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Hayley Fairbairn by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ, by email Hayley.Fairbairn@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 01622 696063 before 4 August 2014 quoting reference number LS/21/105076/440.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Hayley Fairbairn using the contact details shown above.

JOHN BURR

DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION
Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund
Ashford Highway Depot
Henwood Industrial Estate, Javelin Way,
Ashford, Kent, TN24 8AD

For further information, please
contact Kent County Council
Highways and Transportation,
on 03000 418181 (local rate) or
visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways



PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for a New Premises Licence

Applicant: Mr Keith Knell

Premises: Former Little Chef, Thanet Way, Faversham

Proposed Licensable activities

Live Music: Thu – Sat 8pm-12am, Sun 12pm-6pm

Recorded Music: Tue-Wed 12pm-12am, Thu-Sat 12pm-2am Sun 6pm-9pm

Provision of Dance: Tue-Wed 8pm-12am, Thu-Sat 8pm-2am Sun 12pm-9pm

Late Night Refreshment: Tue-Wed 12pm-12am Thu-Sat 12pm-2am

Supply of Alcohol: Tue-Wed 12pm-12am, Thu-Sat 12pm-2am Sun 12pm-9pm

Any objections must be made in writing to:-

The Licensing Dept., Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT
by the 21st July 2014

PLANNING



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/0734/SH+ - 4 Tower Gardens Hythe Kent CT21 6DG - Various pruning works to a Dawn Redwood and a Eucalyptus tree, both subject of Tree Preservation Order No 12 of 2011

Y14/0735/SH+ - 4 Tower Gardens Hythe Kent CT21 6DG - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising: 2 metre reduction in height and 1.5 metre reduction of laterals of a Birch and felling of an Elder, a Griselinia and a Holly followed by the planting of three fruit trees

Y14/0707/SH - Land Opposite 129 A High Street Dymchurch Kent - Felling of two Sycamore and two Elder trees all situated within a conservation area

Y14/0720/SH - Roman House Canterbury Road Etchinghill Folkestone Kent - Section 73 application to vary condition 2 of planning permission Y12/1101/SH to allow an alternative design for the two storey extension, also incorporating a basement

Y14/0154/SH - Aboyne House 46 High Street New Romney Kent TN28 8AT - Change of use of upper floor to restaurant (Class A3) in connection with ground floor restaurant business, together with variation of condition 4 of planning permission Y11/1019/SH to allow a change of opening times for business to 11.30 to 23.00 Monday to Friday, 11.30 to 23.30 Saturdays, and 12.00 to 21.00 Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Y14/0717/SH - Earlscliffe Mews Shorncliffe Road Folkestone Kent CT20 2NB - Crown reduction of two trees situated within a conservation area comprising: 3 metre reduction in height and 2.5 metre reduction of laterals of a Sycamore and 2.5 metre reduction in height and 2.5 to 3.5 metre reduction of laterals of a Yew

Y14/0262/SH - 160A High Street Hythe Kent CT21 5JR - Change of use from restaurant (Class A3) to a micro public house (Class A4).

Y14/0690/SH# - 25 High Street Lydd Romney Marsh Kent TN29 9AH - Installation of 2no. external condenser units for air conditioning and fitted with security cages to the rear elevation.

Y14/0740/SH - Sir John Moore Memorial Hall and Library Somerset Barracks North Road Folkestone Kent - Listed building consent for the replacement of the weather vane by a lightning rod spike.

Y14/0676/SH - 34 The Bayle Folkestone Kent CT20 1SQ - Listed Building Consent to remove existing glass roof from conservatory; build up east end of wall and build new warm flat roof with sky light

Y14/0738/SH - 61 Bourne Road West Folkestone Kent CT20 2RN - Felling of a Leyland Cypress tree situated within a conservation area

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

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After ten years in Smeeth, we will begin a new era for your favourite Kent weekend newspaper when we move into Kent House right into the heart of Ashford town centre.

Kent on Sunday's editorial, advertising and distribution teams will all be based at the modern new offices, along with our colleagues from our sister title, the glossy Kent Life magazine.

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This article also appears on page seven.



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The best things in life really are free



After their reprieve, Dartford

Circumstances conspired to spare the north Kent club relegation this spring and now they are intent on learning from their experiences. Co-chairman Dave Skinner talks to **David Mairs**.

WITHIN minutes of meeting Dartford co-chairman Dave Skinner in the impressive Princes Park stadium on the edge of town, you have a very clear idea of what this football club is all about.

Skinner himself greets you in T-shirt and shorts and buys you a drink, while the walls are adorned with quotes from such literary giants as Albert Camus. Above the players' entrance to the pitch are the words 'This Is Dartford'.

The ambition here is great, but so too is an air of informality and, perhaps above all, friendliness.

That the club survive at all is cause for celebration in itself. An ill-fated ground-share with Maidstone United that began in 1988 had culminated in Dartford having to sell their Watling Street home and themselves assume the role of lodgers at, in turn, Cray Wanderers, Erith & Belvedere, Purfleet and Gravesend and Northfleet.

They were nothing if not well travelled.

Even this doesn't tell the full story, the sale of the ground not being enough to spare them the ignominy of having to withdraw from the Southern League just four games into the 1992-93 season.

"That was the year we didn't play senior football," said Skinner.

But Dartford did still play some football, thanks in essence to the 400-strong supporters' association. A private limited-liability company was formed in November 1992, allowing an under-18s team to contest – and win – the John Ullman Cup.

"As long as we played at some level, we were able to keep our senior status and full membership of the Football Association," said Skinner.

The fact that the cup-final win came over Maidstone Invicta, the club who had evolved from Maidstone United following their departure from the Football League in August 1992, added particular poignancy. Skinner does not have fond memories of his club's association with their tenants from the county town.

No matter, the following season Dartford were accepted into the Kent League and they were back up and running.

"It just went on from there," said Skinner. "We progressed slowly and, with no ground, we were playing where we could."

"We were up against it. One season, in the Southern League, our manager Tommy Sampson had to use 68 players."

Tough times, without question, but the tale of how Dartford managed to

battle their way through them is one of how football fans really can have a stake in the club they support.

"People go on about Wimbledon, but we've been doing this quietly since 1992," said Skinner. "We like to claim we were one of the first supporter-based clubs."

Impressive though the determination to overcome adversity undoubtedly was, the desire for Dartford to have a place to call their own was paramount.

And it was during a 'home' match at Gravesend that Skinner and friends were told the news of which they had dreamt for so long.

"Eventually the [Dartford Borough] council came to us, which they'd probably done five times over the year, and said these are the plans. They actually turned up when we were playing a team at the top of the league."

"We worked alongside each other and it's been glory ever since."

A few delays and a brief return to Purfleet (who had subsequently become Thurrock and whom Skinner described as "very, very welcoming") notwithstanding, Dartford were coming home – and to a new stadium.

Their first match at Princes Park was in November 2006, when they beat Horsham YMCA 4-2 in the Isthmian League Division One South before a capacity crowd of 4,097.

It would be misleading to describe Dartford's ascent since then as meteoric, but it has been impressive and in May 2012 they beat Welling United 1-0 in the Football Conference South play-off at, of all places, Princes Park.

They had reached non-league football's highest level for the first time since 1986, when they were relegated from the Gola League.

Perhaps in keeping for a club for whom life has rarely run smoothly, however, their stay in the Conference Premier appeared to have been a short one when, earlier this year, they finished in 22nd position and were consigned to relegation.

By the same token, though, mat-

“Our plan is still in place – we had looked at making the Conference Premier in 10 years and we did it in six, so we’re four years in credit”

Dave Skinner, on the club's ambitions for League status



ters were never going to be that straightforward and the Darts were reinstated, along with Chester City, when Hereford United and Salisbury City were demoted to Conference South over financial matters.

A Conference statement relating to Salisbury detailed the issues coldly: "The club has failed to meet the requirement to settle all football creditors in cleared funds by 5pm Thursday, 12th June, 2014. Furthermore, it has also failed to provide a financial bond of £50,000 by the same time and date."

However, Salisbury's fall was to be Dartford's reprieve. Had Skinner had any idea as to what might be unfolding?

"You get to know things through talking to people at the clubs. Some will tell you they're struggling or that players haven't been paid – you pick it up but tend not to pass it on."

"You keep it in-house even though the more serious problems can become general knowledge."

"The first inkling we really had, though, was at the Conference AGM

at Celtic Manor when we were sitting in the bar on the Friday evening."

Talk there had it that Hereford and another club were in serious trouble. In the event, the Hereford story transpired as correct, although the second club to eventually tumble through the trapdoor proved to be Salisbury, not the outfit first rumoured.

Does Skinner have any sympathy for the two vanquished clubs?

"No, they bring it entirely on themselves. It's cheating."

"What really annoyed us was that our manager Tony Burman was desperately trying to get players in on loan during the second half of the season. We had Charlie Sheringham lined up to come here, but he ended up going to Salisbury because they said they would sort him out with a full-time deal. We've heard that he didn't actually get paid."

The situation at Salisbury is seemingly worsening, with a power struggle being played out in the glare of the local media, who have reported that "City are now facing an uncertain fu-

ture in the Conference South division, with no apparent backers".

Despite the lack of sympathy for those who have brought Salisbury to their current position, Skinner does have genuine understanding for the club's supporters.

"Their fans are basically going through what we went through all that time ago," he said.

Skinner assumed the role of chairman when the club re-formed in 1992. He had been chairman of the supporters' association and for some time put his hand in his pocket to help out the club he so clearly adores.

Happily, debts have been repaid and the club are on a far stronger footing, meaning such financial commitment is no longer necessary.

Today he has the title 'co-chairman', Bill Archer having come on board to form the other half of the partnership.

"Bill looks after business matters and I do the football, although the roles are totally interchangeable."

Now the question is how do the club move on and avoid altogether the issues of last season.

look only upward

HOME TURF: Dartford co-chairman Dave Skinner has helped steer the club through some choppy waters ... hopefully there's a calmer stretch ahead



"We've got our reprieve," said Skinner. "We're making our plans and we know which players we want to retain – this didn't really change when we learnt we were staying up."

Dartford are a semi-professional club playing in what is increasingly a professional world – Bristol Rovers, for example, will be among next season's opponents – and it's a situation that has its obvious challenges.

"We need players who can commit to training during the day and doing the travelling to away matches. Finance is not always such a big thing – you can pay players a reasonable amount, but it's a question of getting their commitment to give up well-paid jobs."

It might seem a touch early to be talking about Dartford one day making the Football League, given this spring's close shave, but Skinner does not balk from the idea.

"There's no point being in football if you don't aspire to reach the highest level you can," he said. "Our plan is still in place – we had looked at making the Conference Premier in 10

“ We’ve got our reprieve. We’re making our plans and we know which players we want to retain – this didn’t change when we learnt we were staying up ”

Dave Skinner, on reinstatement into the Conference Premier

years and we did it in six, so we're four years in credit."

And that would surely mean a move to full-time...

"We're looking to do that in the foreseeable future."

The aspiration is commendably positive – and rightly so, given all that the club have going for them, not least a hugely supportive local authority – but can Skinner assure sup-

porters that the problems of last season won't be repeated next time round?

"As it showed, the team last year wasn't good enough. Mistakes were made in recruitment and budgeting – we were all over the place."

"But we've learnt from our mistakes and are improving things. I also still maintain that last season was exceptional in that we had so many injuries, meaning we had to beg and borrow loan players."

It could be argued that a club with such experience of the highs and lows of non-league football should have been canny enough to steer clear of the problems they did in fact hit, but Skinner offers a realistic view.

"It was because we hadn't played at such a high level before," he said, referring to the personnel in place since the club's restructuring in 1992.

"It's probable we'd been making those mistakes before but got away with it because of the level we were at – we were big fish in a small pond."

The pond is bigger now, and this particular fish clearly has no intention of getting lost in it again.

Sport Shorts » Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Dave Mairs on 01233 653479



TITLE SHOT NEXT: Matt Hilliker, right, during his win over Peter Green

Hilliker pins hopes on jab at Ally Pally

DARTFORD cruiserweight Matt Hilliker is getting ready for the biggest fight of his life next month as he prepares to step through the ropes at London's Alexandra Palace.

He will face London's Ryan Crawford on Saturday, July 12, in his bid to lift the vacant Queensbury Boxing League title on the undercard of the Kings Of The Palace promotion, and the 31-year-old gym instructor is confident he has the tools required to take the victory after seeing his rival up close and personal.

Hilliker was last in action back in March, when he had to climb off the canvas in the opening round of his showdown with old rival Peter Green to secure his shot at the belt with a majority points decision. He is confident that months of hard training will pay off on the biggest night of his boxing career.

"Since the victory over Green I've literally had a week off from training and I've been working on a lot of new things in the gym getting ready for

this fight," said Hilliker. "I was ringside to watch Crawford in action and he's very similar in style to me, so I'm hoping he's not going to be hard to find in this fight, which will allow me to box a bit, more which is what I want."

London's Crawford will bring an undefeated league record into the showdown with Hilliker after defeating Camberley's Lucas Krakowiak, but the Dartford man has seen enough to be confident.

"Crawford looked good in the fight, but he looked uncomfortable when under pressure, especially from the straight shots Krakowiak was hitting him with, and with my jab being one of my key weapons I really feel I can pick him off with that all night."

"I've got a good game-plan coming into this fight and I'm confident I can do the job, so I'm looking forward to getting back into the ring and putting it all together now."

For more on the rest of the line-up, visit www.queensburyboxing.co.uk.

Kent avoid penalty after ECB probe

KENT have escaped a points deduction after having their Canterbury pitch for the LV= County Championship Division Two match against Derbyshire rated "below average".

An England and Wales Cricket Board pitch panel, chaired by Tony Pigott, interviewed umpires, ground staff and representatives of both teams following the game, with Pigott announcing that the pitch had been marked as below average.

A club statement said: "In effect, Kent have received a warning only for preparing a surface that was excessively dry."

Pigott said: "After reviewing all the information we have received, from the umpires Rob Bailey and Martin Bodenham, the captains and head coaches of both sides, and the head groundsman here, we have decided there is to be no penalty."

Kent won the match by 10 wickets.

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